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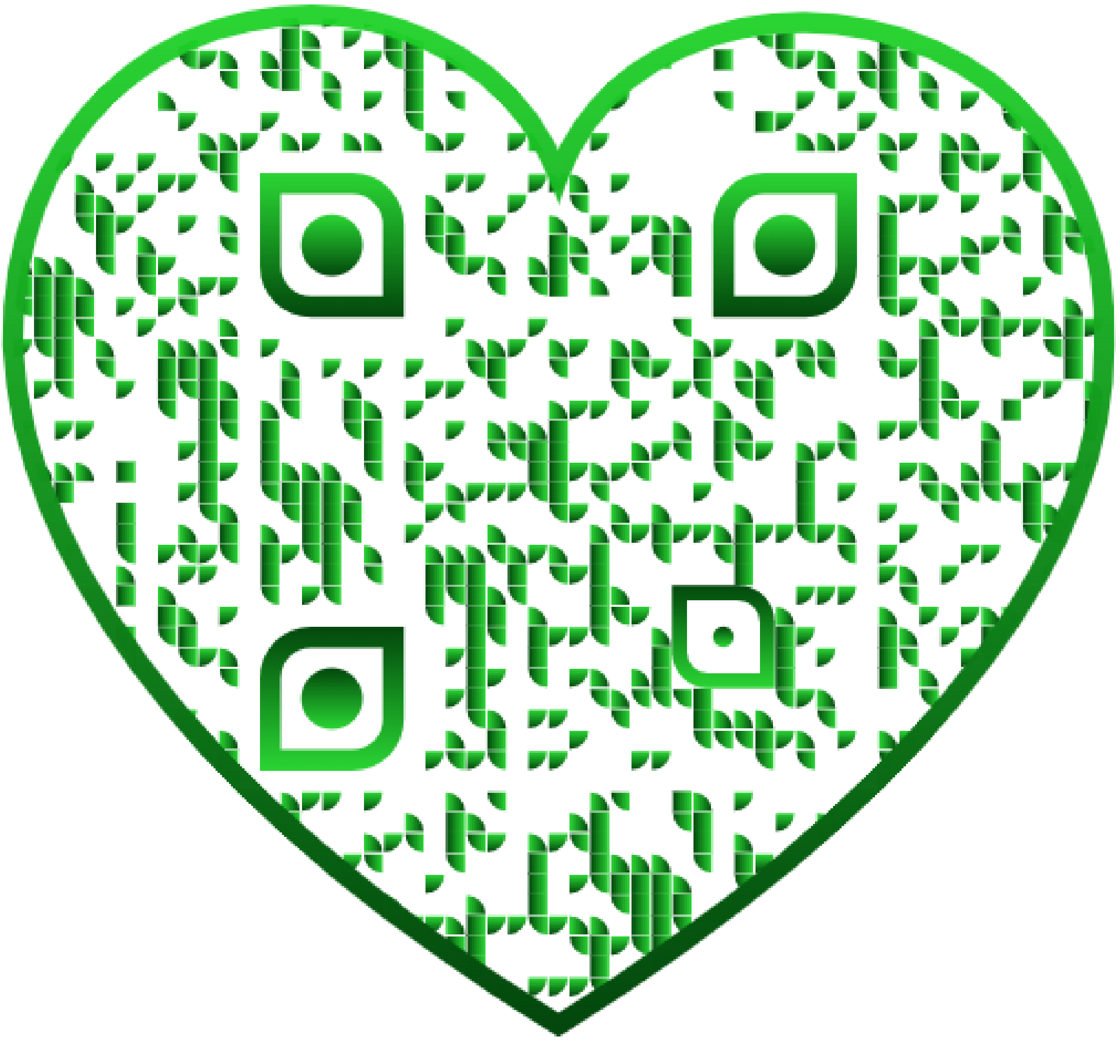

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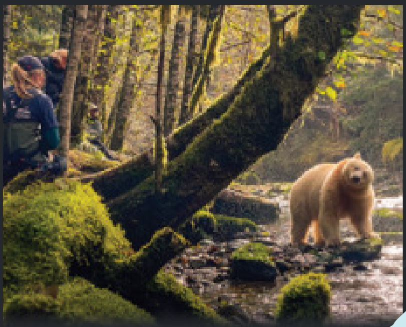

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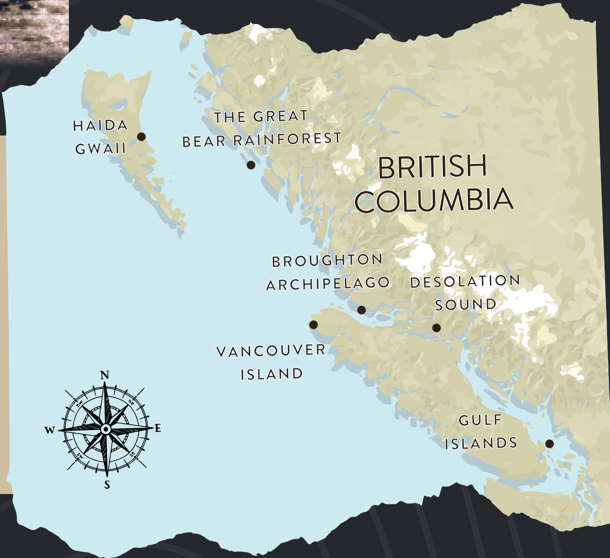
HAIDA GWAII
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Maple Leaf ADVENTURES

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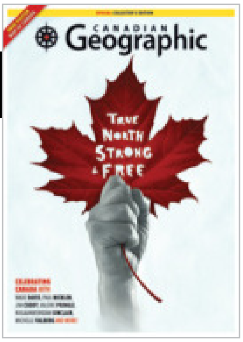
JULY/
AUGUST
2025

ON THE COVER

For this special collector's issue celebrating Canada's sovereignty, artist Robert Carter created this illustration depicting Canada's strength, unity and defiance.



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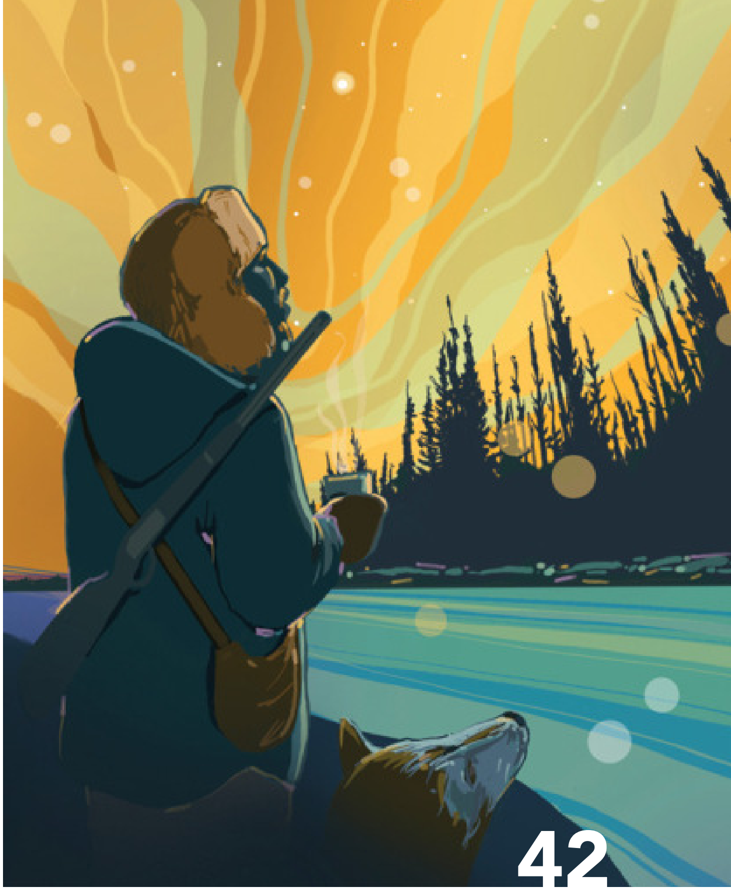
On guard with thee *by Francine Pelletier*

True, strong and free *by Mel Woods*

The Canadian Dream *by Kamal Al-Solaylee, photography by Mariel Nelms*



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By Susan Nerberg with photography by Christian Fleury

COVER: ROBERT CARTER. FROM TOP: KERRY HODGSON; CHRISTIAN FLEURY

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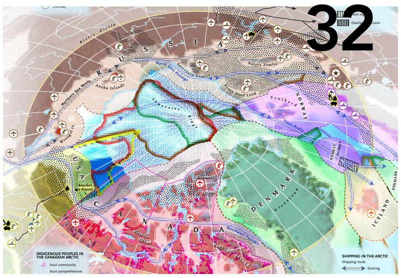

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PAUL NICKLEN; AP PHOTO/CHARLES KRUPA; CHRIS BRACKLEY/CAN GEO; YAGNESH MANGUKIYA/CAN GEO PHOTO CLUB; THE CANADIAN PRESS/PAUL CHIASSON; ANDY MORA

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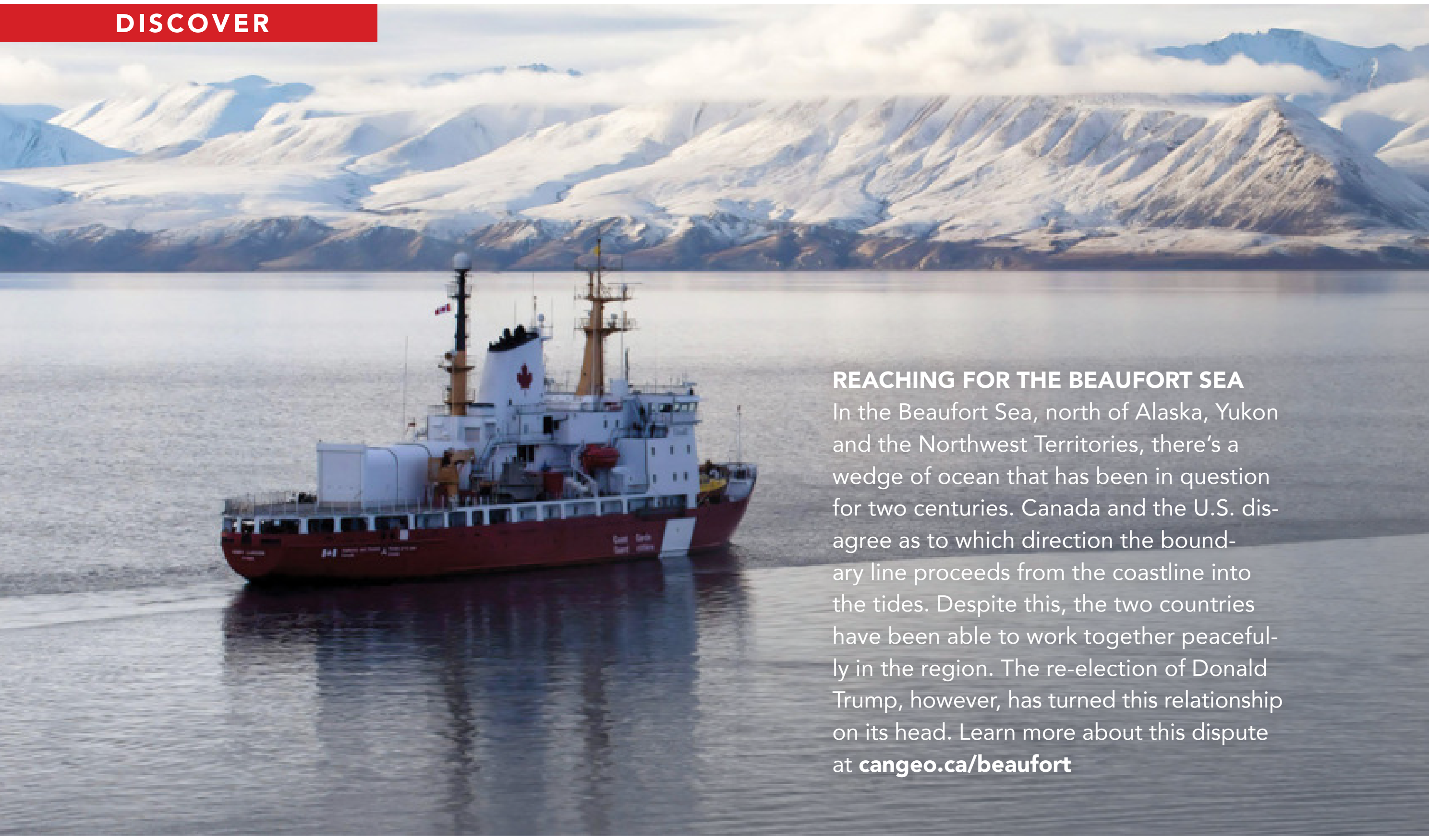
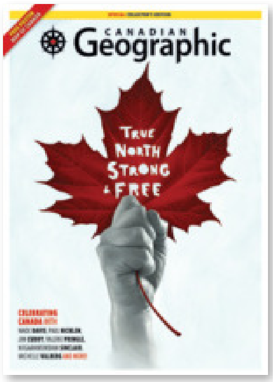


REACHING FOR THE BEAUFORT SEA

In the Beaufort Sea, north of Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories, there's a wedge of ocean that has been in question for two centuries. Canada and the U.S. disagree as to which direction the boundary line proceeds from the coastline into the tides. Despite this, the two countries have been able to work together peacefully in the region. The re-election of Donald Trump, however, has turned this relationship on its head. Learn more about this dispute at **cangeo.ca/beaufort**

COVER STORY



TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE

For this special issue celebrating Canada and its sovereignty, our cover needed to represent Canadians' spirit during this pivotal moment in our history. Robert Carter, an award-winning Canadian artist and Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, captured this sentiment perfectly with his illustration of a defiant fist grasping our maple leaf triumphantly — a powerful statement on strength, courage and unity. We are also happy to unveil our new logo. As our online presence continues to grow by leaps and bounds, this banner better matches our digital identity and our brand across other platforms.

PHOTOGRAPHY CLIMATE NEWS TRAVEL WILDLIFE CULTURE

Canadian Geographic Newsletters

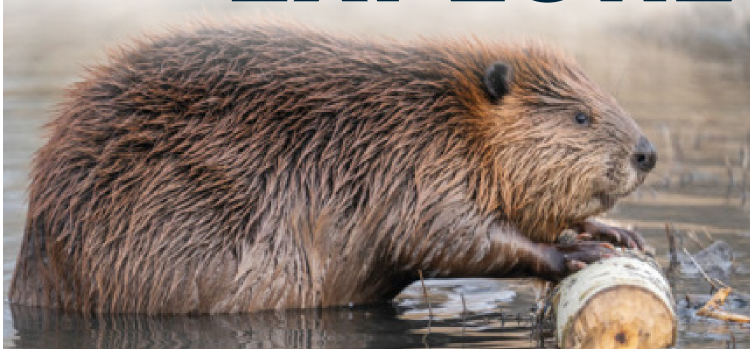
CANGEO.CA/NEWSLETTERS

Travel

ANTICOSTI ADVENTURE

Fossils, waterfalls ...and about 130,000 deer. Anticosti Island is Canada's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site and a truly off-the-beaten-path destination for summer adventure. Follow along as writer Darcy Rhyno and photographer Christian Fleury explore the outsized geography of this ancient island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. **cangeo.ca/anticosti**

EXPLORE



BEAVER FEVER

"Nothing other than humans is comparable to what beavers can do on the landscape," Glynnis Hood, a world-renowned beaver expert and professor emerita of ecology at the University of Alberta, tells Explore host David McGuffin. The pair discuss the significance of the beaver as a shaper of landscapes and as Canada's national animal, marking its 50th anniversary. **cangeo.ca/explore**

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: IAN HOGG/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CHRISTIAN FLEURY/CAN GEO; TONY LEPRIEUR/ISTOCK. COVER: ROBERT CARTER

ILLUSTRATION: ROBERT CARTER

BEING CANADIAN

THE SUMMERS I was 11 and 12, my mom, an elementary school teacher, decided it was time for me to see my country. We drove west as far as Calgary, then east as far as Prince Edward Island, mostly camping along the way, except for the odd night we craved a real bed (and one memorable occasion when we drove through a violent thunderstorm outside Winnipeg and were too rattled to sleep outdoors). These journeys gave me an appreciation for the scale of Canada — the southern part of it, anyway — and of the time and effort required to even begin to know it.

I am Canadian, but as an adult, I've occasionally struggled to find meaning in that — something more tangible than the tired stereotypes about niceness and cold tolerance. When I first read Wade Davis' brilliant essay on page 42, I thought about those childhood road trips and the many others that followed, and realized that I feel most Canadian when I'm in motion on the landscape: canoeing across a rain-dimpled Ontario lake, clambering over red rocks on a P.E.I. beach, flying down a B.C. mountainside on skis. In experiencing our geography, I experience what could be said to be defining traits of Canadianness: strength. Determination. Capability. Curiosity. Contentment.

The outpouring of love for this country that has followed Trump's insults and annexation threats is truly inspiring; that a place this large and diverse could rally so quickly around shared values is nothing short of miraculous. This is undoubtedly our moment; the question now is, what do we do with it? This special issue is both a celebration and a call to action: to defend our freedoms, to know our history, and to continue to reflect on what it means to be Canadian, in Canada and in the world. What does it mean to you?

—Alexandra Pope

To comment, please email editor@canadiangeographic.ca or visit cangeo.ca.

For inside details on the magazine, follow editor Alexandra Pope on Bluesky (@xelaepop.bsky.social) and Instagram (@xela.explores).

NEARLY A CENTURY AGO, IN 1929, a remarkable group of Canadian innovators came together to form the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS). They were drawn from all regions of the country and from all sectors of society. They had one shared purpose for the new Society: to publish a magazine that would **"be a unifying influence upon the life of Canada."**

Their intention was for the RCGS to touch all Canadians — "to count among its members all men and women who have complete faith in their country, and who recognize it as a duty and a privilege to learn more about Canada" — and to help **spread that knowledge at home and abroad**. Little has changed in the intervening years.

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society publishes *Canadian Geographic*, the country's number one paid magazine by readership, and operates Canadian Geographic Education, which reaches **28,000 educators** in every province and territory. Little wonder the maple leaf sits in the middle of the Society's iconic Compass Rose flag; **Canada is at the heart of everything we do**.

Irrespective of any tariffs imposed by the U.S. administration, let's not forget what has happened in recent months. A U.S. President threatening economic pressure to undermine Canadian sovereignty, stating that without an imagined "massive subsidy" from the U.S., Canada "ceases to exist as a viable country" and implying it would somehow be desirable to be downgraded to the status of the 51st state.

This should serve as a wake-up call for us all. We cannot leave this fight to politicians and government alone; we all have a stake in standing up for our country, celebrating its achievements, and deepening our knowledge of its human and physical geography. The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, *Canadian Geographic*, and Canadian Geographic Education have never been more vital.

Help us to fulfill our founders' vision, so beautifully captured in our motto,
DUCIT AMOR PATRIAE **— love of country leads me**

John Geiger, C.M.
Chief Executive Officer

Please support the Royal Canadian Geographical Society by subscribing to *Canadian Geographic*, and by donating to help us keep telling canada's story.

BIG PICTURE

Celebrating Canada’s Grandeur

PHOTO BY **PAUL NICKLEN**

High in the canopy of the Great Bear Rainforest, a small female spirit bear climbs the branches of a crab apple tree in search of a meal. She is known as Ma'ah, meaning grandmother, to Gitga'at First Nation. Spirit bears, also called kermode bears, are American black bears born with a white coat due to the presence of a recessive gene. Found only in the coastal rainforests of British Columbia, they are among the rarest bears on Earth.

Paul Nicklen (@paulnicklen) is an internationally celeb-rated Canadian wildlife photographer, filmmaker and marine biologist. paulnicklen.com

EXPOSURE

Showcasing our photo community

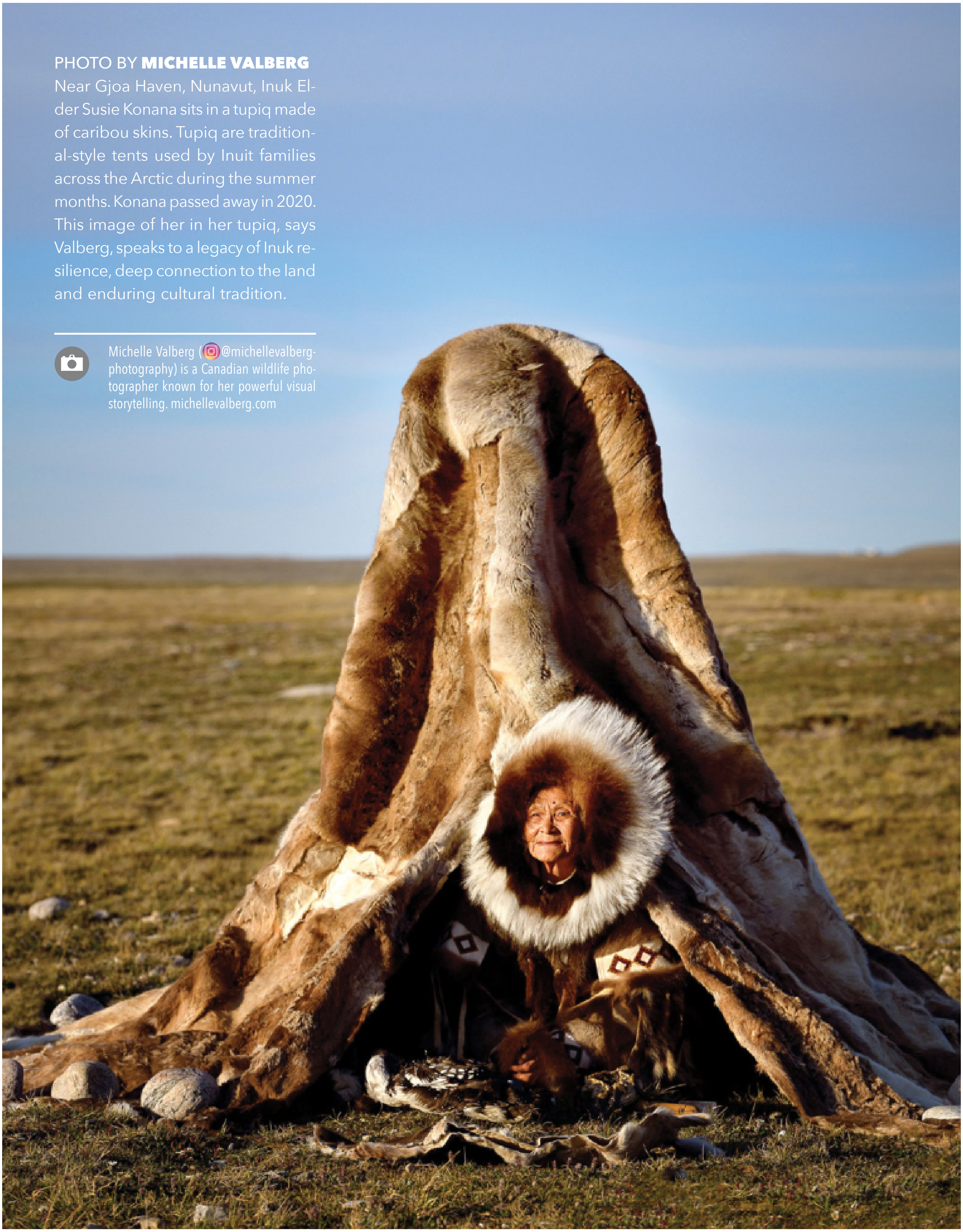


PHOTO BY **MICHELLE VALBERG**
Near Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, Inuk Elder Susie Konana sits in a tupiq made of caribou skins. Tupiq are traditional-style tents used by Inuit families across the Arctic during the summer months. Konana passed away in 2020. This image of her in her tupiq, says Valberg, speaks to a legacy of Inuk resilience, deep connection to the land and enduring cultural tradition.

Michelle Valberg (@michellevalbergphotography) is a Canadian wildlife photographer known for her powerful visual storytelling. michellevalberg.com

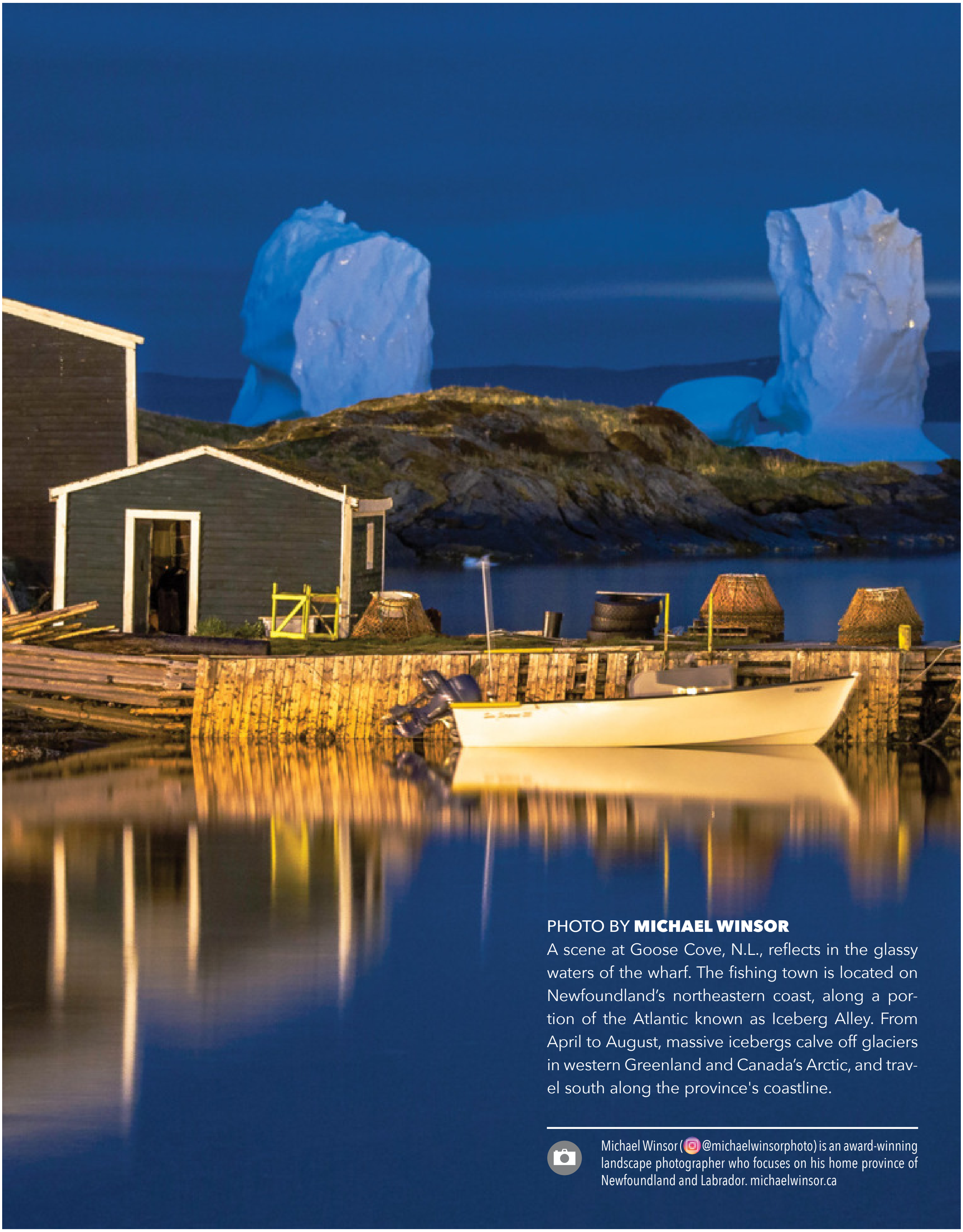


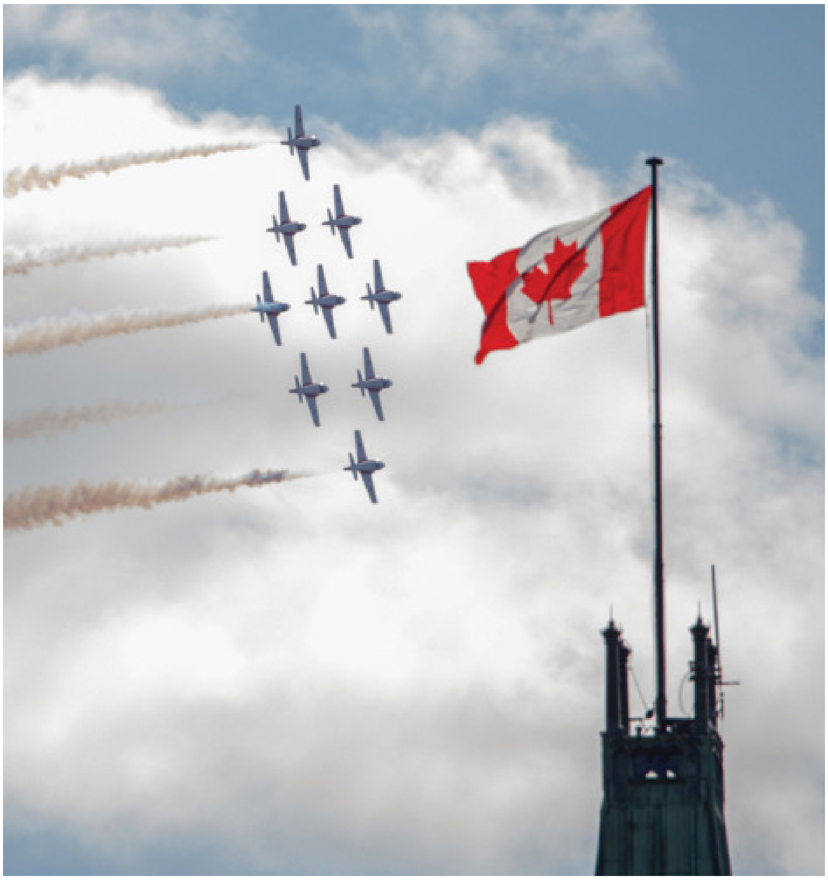
PHOTO BY **MICHAEL WINSOR**

A scene at Goose Cove, N.L., reflects in the glassy waters of the wharf. The fishing town is located on Newfoundland's northeastern coast, along a portion of the Atlantic known as Iceberg Alley. From April to August, massive icebergs calve off glaciers in western Greenland and Canada's Arctic, and travel south along the province's coastline.

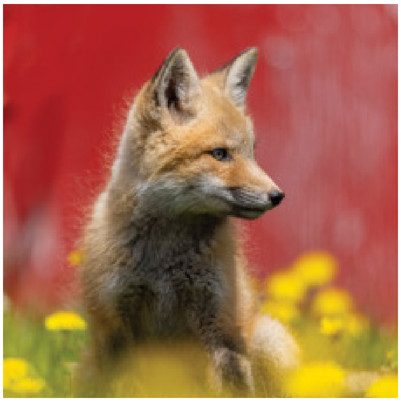
Michael Winsor (@michaelwinsorphoto) is an award-winning landscape photographer who focuses on his home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. michaelwinsor.ca

IN A SNAP

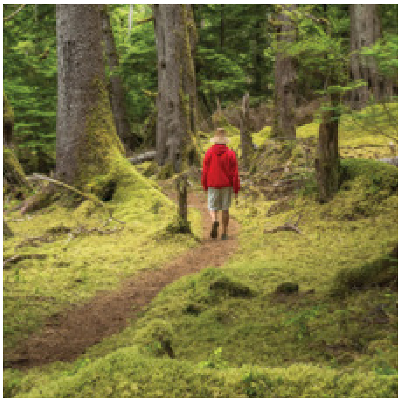
Sharing Can Geo via Instagram



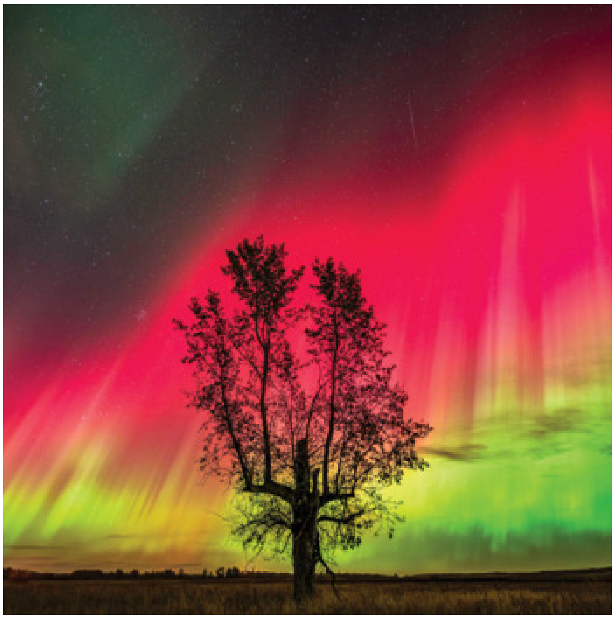
@rolandbast **Roland Bast**
Canadian Forces Snowbirds fly over Parliament Hill on Canada Day, Ottawa



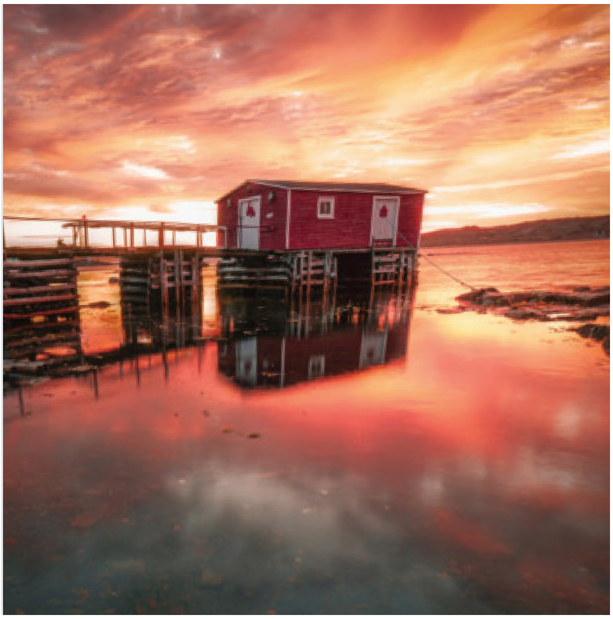
@bkcrossman **Brittany Crossman**
Red fox kit near Kensington, P.E.I.



@javiers_wonderplanet **Javier Frutos**
Hlk'yah G̱awG̱a (Windy Bay), Haida Gwaii, B.C.



@gilbertkaterynych **Gilbert Katerynych**
Aurora borealis outside of Battleford, Sask.



@gord_follett_photography **Gord Follett**
Sunrise over Joe Batt's Arm, N.L.

Find us @CanGeo and share your best photos with us using the hashtag #ShareCanGeo.

Team Canada's Connor McDavid celebrates his game-winning goal in the 4 Nations final.

AP PHOTO/CHARLES KRUPA

Roy MacGregor

On the intersection of hockey, politics and Canadian patriotism

INTERVIEW BY **DAVID MCGUFFIN**

Since the beginning of the year, hockey, politics and Canadian patriotism have collided — with the 2025 4 Nations Face-Off hockey tournament at the centre. The February tournament, planned a year earlier, took on a significance no one could have predicted, shaped by the ongoing political tensions between Canada and the United States. But the relationship between hockey and politics, says veteran journalist Roy MacGregor, who has covered both extensively, has always been there. Now at the forefront of Canadian identity more than ever before, their explosive mix has reignited a sense of national pride and unity among Canadians.

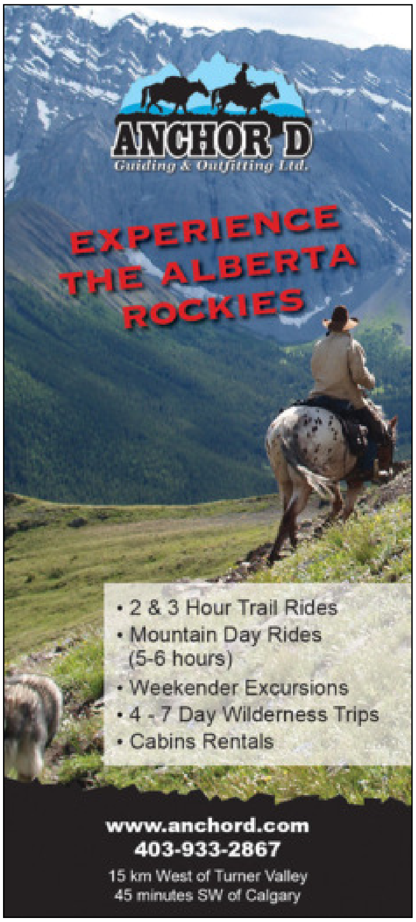
On Canada's 4 Nations triumph

This tournament is not quite up there with 1972 (the Summit Series between Canada and the Soviet Union), but it's pretty damn close. And it's close only because of what's going on with Donald Trump and tariffs and the Canadian election. '72 was purely a test of world hockey skills; 2025 was very much a political hockey game. But the 4 Nations Face-Off didn't have Russia. So it was a great tournament, but it wasn't perfect. The perfection of it came from it being Canada

Team Canada captain Sidney Crosby hoists the trophy after defeating the United States; journalist Roy MacGregor (ABOVE).

versus the United States in the final, and Canada triumphed when our country needed something.

On the blend of hockey and politics
When I went from Parliament Hill to covering hockey, I used to say that it's almost exactly the same thing, except the politicians don't have numbers on their backs. You have the scrums at the end, you have the "BS" going on, you have the little inner workings. But hockey and politics have been blended [for a long time]. We grew up hearing that somebody was stick-handling some legislation through the House of Commons, that somebody in the House of Commons was filibustering, which meant they were ragging the puck. We even had ex-hockey players like Syl Apps becoming a cabinet minister. Red Kelly ran for office when he was still playing and was there for three years, going back and forth between Ottawa and the Toronto Maple Leafs! Ken Dryden became a cabinet minister and did very well. The link has always been there, but I don't think it ever reared its head as high as it did during the 4 Nations Face-Off.



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On Trump's threats to Canada
I covered referendums. I was there at Oka. I've been there when everybody thought it was the end of the world and it wasn't. This time, what I truly believe began as a joke turned into a real story that Trump really wanted to [make Canada the 51st state] and hurt us. I don't have to go down the list of what we have done for the United States. We have been an ally that has been 100 per cent reliable and more. And then suddenly we find out that our so-called closest friend is dumping on us, accusing us of things that aren't true, attacking us and trying to disorient us. In 50 years of journalism, and all my life, I never thought I would cover not only a person but a group so unaware of reality, so obsessed with their own selves, so wrong and so unwilling to listen.

On Canada getting tough
I'm old, but not old enough to remember what Canadian soldiers did for Europe or the United States when they got into various predicaments. And there would be these incredible moments of pride. I imagine after World War II, it was way up there. But it's up there now at a level that we have never seen or felt before and, frankly, it feels pretty good. In some small way, I'm kind of glad this happened because it showed my country that we are the people we thought we were. And even though they joke about us being *so* polite and *so* harmless, we're actually pretty tough.

On rising Canadian patriotism
The booing of the U.S. anthem [at 4 Nations] was so un-Canadian. Can you imagine anything more un-Canadian than for us to show disrespect to another country's anthem? But it changed us, that funny cliché, "elbows up." That's a hockey term too, of course, from Gordie Howe. I've liked it. I've felt good these last few months about being Canadian and seeing Canadians who usually are at odds with each other, depending on where they live, locking arms. I'm not running around thinking that, I'm not Alberta, I am not Quebec, I'm not this and that. I am all those things, I hope. I hope they feel they are all these things as well. Canada is Canada is Canada.

LEFT: AP PHOTO/CHARLES KRUPA. RIGHT: FRED LUM

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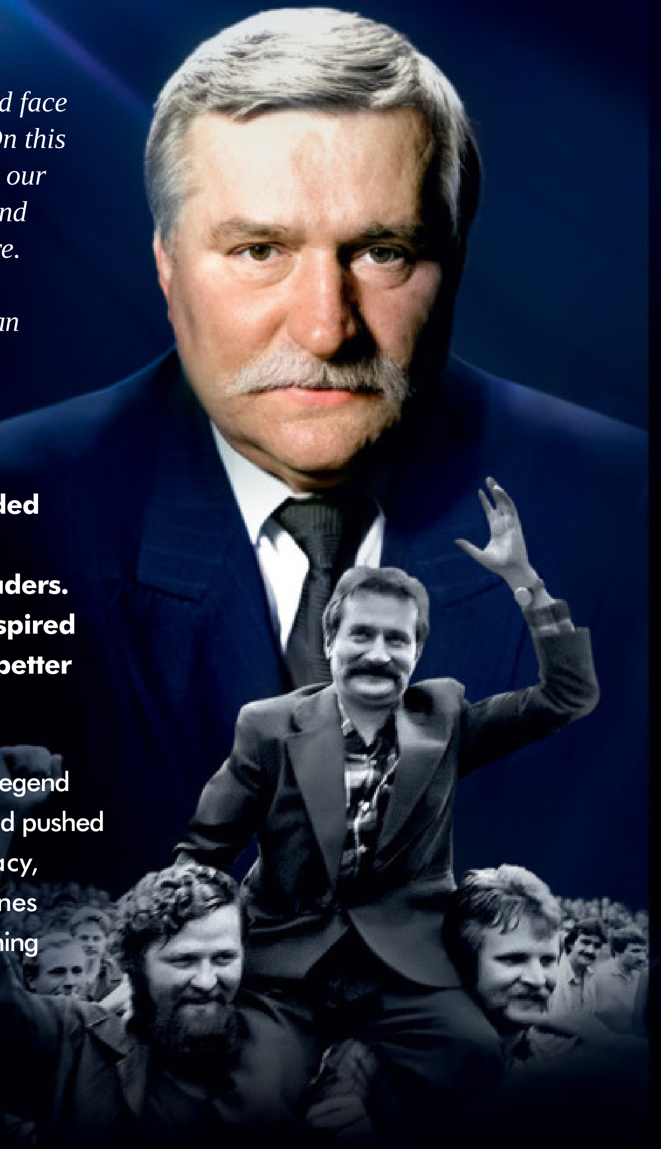

> “*We, the people,*
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Sep 20	Dallas, TX
Sep 22	Atlanta, GA
Sep 24	Columbus, OH
Sep 26	Pittsburgh, PA
Sep 27	Baltimore, MD
Sep 28	Cleveland, OH
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Avian flu out EAST

EASTERN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND saw a die-off of 17 Canada geese from avian flu this spring, with an infected bird found in New Brunswick around the same time. While western provinces have had huge waves of avian flu outbreaks in domestic stocks in recent years, the Maritimes have been relatively spared. More than eight million domestic birds have been hit by H5-subtype avian flu in British Columbia alone, while fewer than 100 have been hit in N.B., and none in P.E.I. But the recent news of infected birds dying in P.E.I. — and an infected red-breasted merganser found in nearby N.B., the first case of 2025 in the province — has Maritimers worried about what's to come.

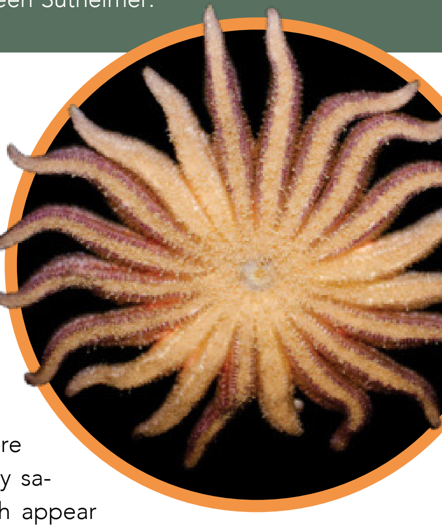
1.8 MILLION

THAT'S HOW MANY SEISMIC LINES — corridors cleared by the oil and gas industry — criss-cross northern Alberta's boreal forest. The lines, linear and free of dense bush, have become speedy thoroughfares for grey wolves and have massively decreased the habitat of boreal woodland caribou, which avoid areas within 250 metres of the lines due to the risk of predation. The provincial government is now looking at the costly process of regenerating these lines to save the caribou, using research from the University of Alberta to help inform them "when to let a seismic line regenerate passively — on its own — versus when to spend time and money to intervene," says study lead Colleen Sutheimer.

"It is HUGE!"

SAID STEVEN GUILBEAULT, then minister responsible for Parks Canada, about the move to almost quadruple the size of Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park to help fragile species at the point where the Saguenay River meets the St. Lawrence. The park could reach a total size of 4,500 square kilometres (nearly three per cent of Quebec's marine environment) and protect 100 per cent of the region's beluga habitat — up from 40 per cent now. About 900 belugas inhabit the region today, but numbers have been declining by one per cent every year since the early 2000s.

Read *Canadian Geographic*'s latest wildlife stories at cangeo.ca/wildlife.



Nature's cooler

ONCE COMMON in the Pacific Northwest intertidal zone, the sunflower sea star — capable of growing a metre across and 20 arms — was all but wiped out in 2013 by the devastating sea star wasting disease. Now, researchers at the Hakai Institute in B.C. and the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance are finding hope in the deeper, colder, highly saline waters of the province's fiords, which appear to offer a disease-limiting refuge for the sea stars. Snowmelt and glacial run-off in the summer chase the sea stars into deeper waters, which act "like a cooler, where the freshwater run-off is a lid of low salinity that's holding them down," says Hakai Institute researcher Alyssa Gehman.

NATURAL ARCHIVES

TREE RINGS IN THE MOUNTAINS of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula offer a 200-year window into the region's climate history. Concordia University paleoclimatologists say climate change has already reshaped the region, and their findings indicate snowpack in the mountains has declined considerably in recent decades. The study went back as far as 1822, extending current records by more than 100 years. The thickness of a tree's rings correlates with the deepness of that year's snowpack and the subsequent length of the growing season.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: YAGNESH MANGUKIYA/CAN GEO PHOTO CLUB; MONICA DAHL/CAN GEO PHOTO CLUB; BRIAN GRATWICKE/FLICKR [CC BY 2.0]; MAREK STUDZINSKI/UNSPLASH; GERALD CORSI/ISTOCK

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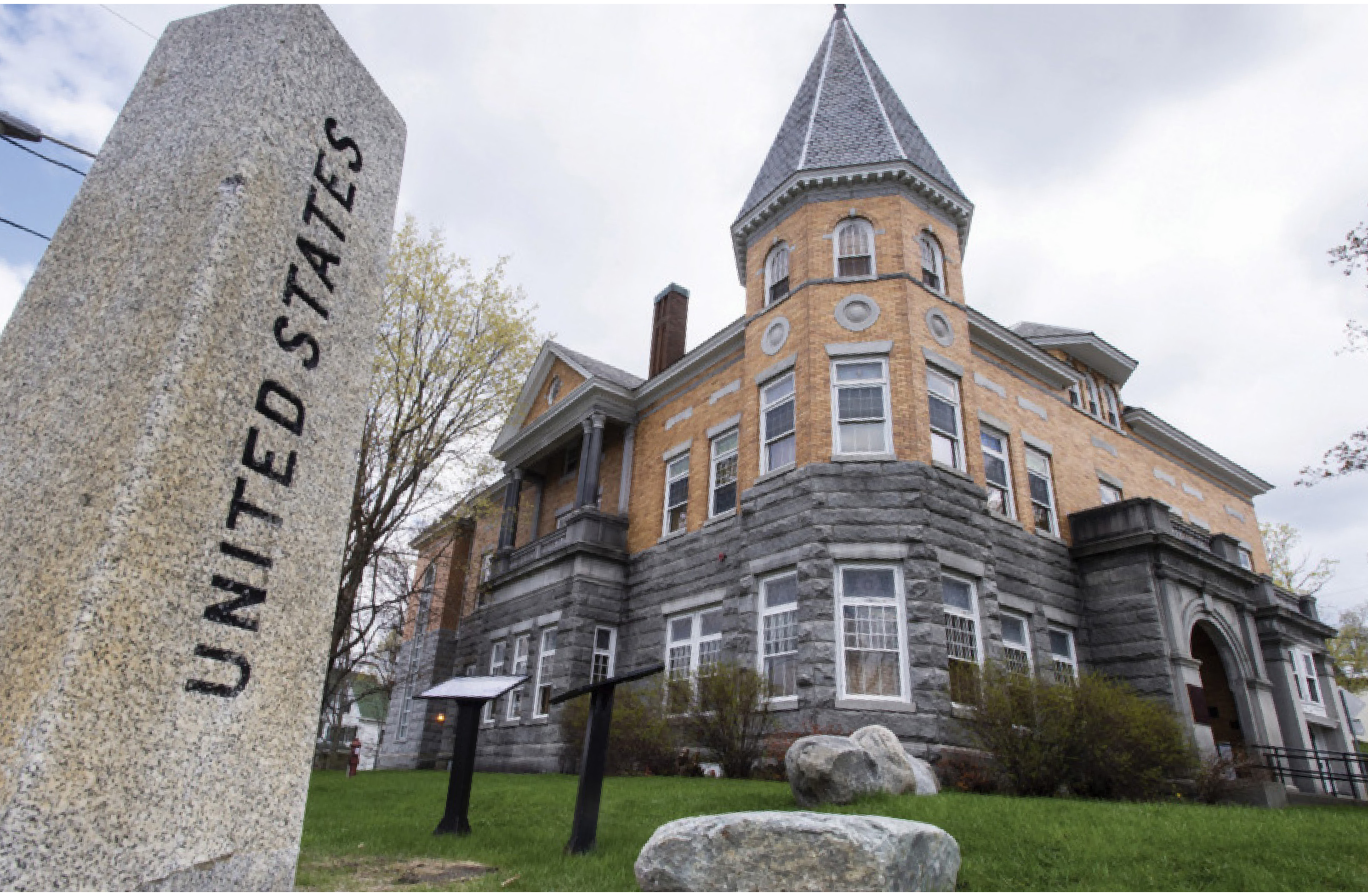
QUEEN ELIZABETH®

Over the line

The Haskell Free Library and Opera House was built as a symbol of friendship between Canada and the U.S. Now, that friendship is being tested.

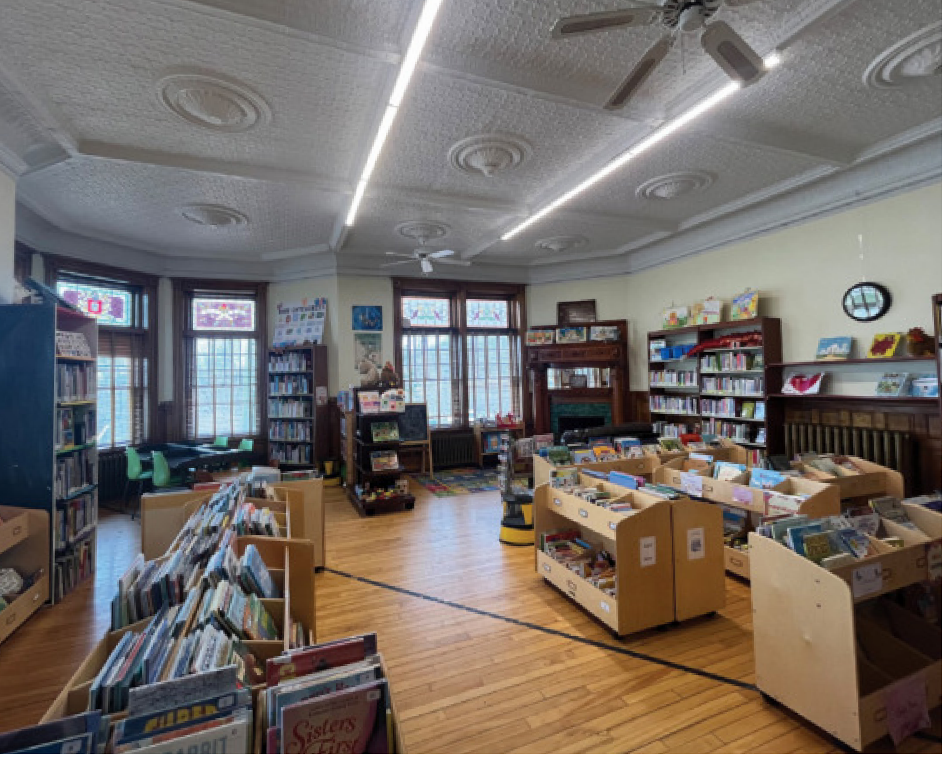
BY **TOULA DRIMONIS**

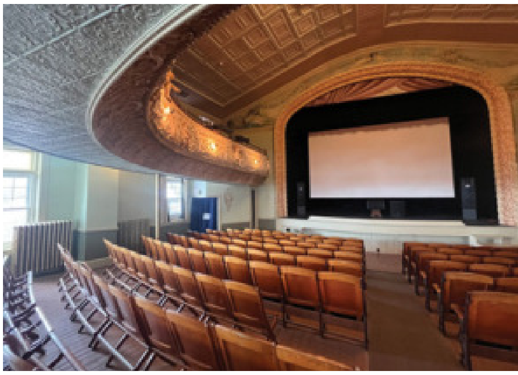


FOR MORE THAN a century, the Haskell Free Library and Opera House straddling the U.S.-Canada border at Stanstead, Que., and Derby Line, Vermont, has stood as a symbol of enduring goodwill and bilateral friendship.

What makes this library so unique is its location. The main entrance is in the United States, while most of the building is in Canada. A line of thick electrical tape runs across the library floor, demarcating the international border. A sign outside neighbouring Stanstead South United Church reminds visitors that cross-border unity runs deep here. "Even during the War of 1812," it reads, "the faithful from both sides of the border attended religious services performed by a Vermont pastor in the church."

For well over a century, an unwritten rule allowed Canadians to freely access the library using the front door without having to go through U.S. customs, even though they were entering another country. But all that changed earlier this year when the Trump administration unilaterally decided to bar Canadians' access to the front door. Now, Canadians without a library card must enter via the back door or risk fines or arrest. The decision shocked and saddened residents of both communities who've long considered each other family.





A view of the main entrance (PREVIOUS) from the building's American side. The library and theatre (THIS PAGE) are divided by the border.

TOULA DRIMONIS. PREVIOUS: THE CANADIAN PRESS/PAUL CHIASSON

Gabriel Safdie, director of the Stanstead Arts Centre, says the library has always been an important symbol for both nations. "The latest developments are very upsetting," he says. "Cross-border harmony survived 9/11 and the pandemic."

The library celebrates the union of American sawmill owner Carlos Haskell and his Canadian wife Martha Stewart Haskell, who wanted both countries to enjoy it. The ornate stone, two-storey Queen Anne Revival-style building houses 20,000 books on the main floor, with a 400-seat theatre upstairs. When the building was completed and donated to both towns in 1904, the Haskell family specified no taxes be paid to either side.

Kathy Converse, a 78-year-old Vermont resident and longtime volunteer, often acts as unofficial guide. "When I retired, I couldn't stand it," she says. "This is the perfect place to put an old English teacher." She's there every Thursday and Friday.

Converse points to the late Victorian architecture, rich woodwork, pressed steel ceilings and ornate fire places. Upstairs, the elegant theatre is accented in Martha Stewart Haskell's favourite colours, peach and green. "The cheap mahogany seats cost around five cents at the time," she says.

Black electrical tape also runs straight through the theatre, denoting the border. Most of the audience sits in the U.S., watching performers on a Canadian stage. This is the spot where U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem stood in January, right at the boundary line, when she uttered "U.S.A. No. 1," before stepping into Canada and referring to the country as "the 51st state."

"Our elevator is also in the U.S.," Converse explains. "During pandemic border closures, Canadian patrons with mobility issues had to go through customs to access it."

She points to a house across the street. "Their front door is in the U.S., so they pay taxes to Vermont. They can exit their back door onto their lawn, but they can't access the street because that's Canada."

Border patrol cameras are visible in the trees around the library, and patrol cars routinely roam the premises but have no jurisdiction inside, unless they're asked in. Permission is needed from both Quebec and Vermont historical societies for any visible repairs required in the building. Protocol stipulates who's called.

"If a toilet malfunctions and it's on the U.S. side," says Converse, "we're supposed to get a U.S. plumber. If it's in Canada, we bring in a Canadian plumber. If it's out of sight, anyone will do."

It's the type of routine upkeep Sylvie Boudreau, president of the Haskell board of directors, thought she would be tackling when she joined a board that always seats four Americans and three Canadians. "It's a small town, so nothing really happens," the Stanstead resident chuckles. "All of a sudden, we're the news."

When access was limited for Canadians, Boudreau sprang into action, immediately setting in motion a GoFundMe to create a new Canadian entrance using the existing back door.

"Within 48 hours we had $100,000 donated from both sides of the border," says Converse. So far, they've raised almost $200,000.

"It won't be as grandiose as the main entrance because it's a heritage building," says Boudreau. "It will be a regular little door, but we'll make it homey."

Best-selling author Louise Penny also donated $50,000 to the library's foundation, vowing to end her book tour here.

"Closing the main entrance to Canadians," says Safdie, "runs against everything the building symbolizes." But border politics haven't affected long-enduring human connections.

"It's made us even more united," says Boudreau. ❂

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Full circle

The U.S. Tariff Act of 1890 was meant to hurt Canada. Instead, it made us stronger.

BY **CRAIG BAIRD**

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau had a message for Americans when he spoke at the Commercial Club banquet in Providence, Rhode Island, on Nov. 28, 1891. He told them the sudden increase in tariffs on all Canadian goods going into the United States was a measure, "for the passing of which we ought not to feel angry with the United States. It has done us good, caused us to realize that we stand upon our own feet, who before leaned a little for support upon the United States."

He said these words more than 130 years ago, but with U.S.-imposed tariffs and talk of annexation again rearing their ugly heads, they would not be out of place today.

In October 1890, just over a year before Chapleau gave his speech in Rhode Island, the Tariff Act of 1890 came into law in the United States. It immediately put forward tariffs on some imports to the United States of nearly 50 per cent.

It was popularly known as the McKinley Tariff, named in honour of the future president and Trump hero who championed it, William McKinley. (Trump has also reinstated McKinley's name on Alaska's Mount Denali, a Denaakk'e word made official during the Obama administration to honour some of the region's Indigenous peoples.)

In one speech in Boston on Oct. 4, 1892, McKinley said of his devotion to tariffs, "under free trade the trader is the master and the producer the slave. Protection is but the law of nature, the law of self-preservation, of self-development, of securing the highest and best destiny of the race of man."

In truth, there was another reason for the tariffs that mirrors our current trade war: the annexation of Canada. At the time, the United States and Canada were at odds over fishery and timber rights along our borders.

Some, like Secretary of State and bill co-author James G. Blaine, believed the issue could be resolved through annexation. "Our great want is an expansion of trade. We are not seeking annexation of territory, certainly we do not desire it, unless it should come by the volition of the people who might ask the priceless boon of a place under the flag of the Union," he said on Aug. 30, 1890, in Maine.

Some publications, like the *Washington Post*, said it was "absurd" and "erroneous" to think the tariffs were put in place to annex Canada, and this publicly held belief was a "preposterous delusion." The *Hamilton Spectator* hit back at the *Post* with its own evidence of the annexation threat.

"Public speakers in the United States boldly advocate annexation. Senators and congressmen in their places in their respective legislative halls right under the nose of the *Washington Post*, have time and time again spoke of the desirability of annexing Canada. Every American visitor who comes to Canada, and looks upon this fair land, says to us, 'What a dandy state this would make.'"

Canadians were not fooled, and not giving in. Shortly after the McKinley Tariff passed, John A. Macdonald delivered a speech on the tariffs, stating that giving in to the United States would be traitorous to our British heritage. "The American lion and the Canadian lamb might be down together, but the lamb would be inside the lion."

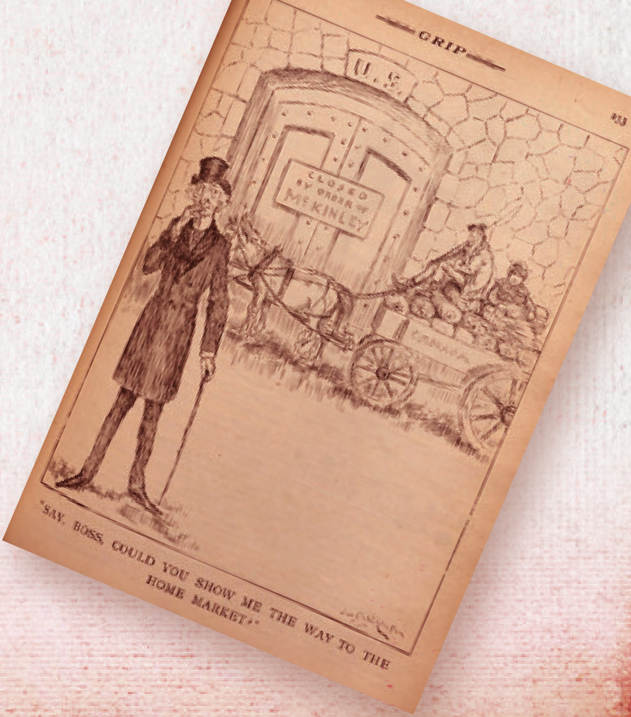
One of the end goals of the McKinley Tariff may have been forcing Canada to become the 45th state, but it achieved the exact opposite and pushed Canada closer to the British Empire. Between 1890 and 1891, trade between Canada and Britain grew by about $1 million, a trend that continued in the subsequent years. In 2025, as our nation faces these same threats, Canada looks to the European Union to diversify our trading network.

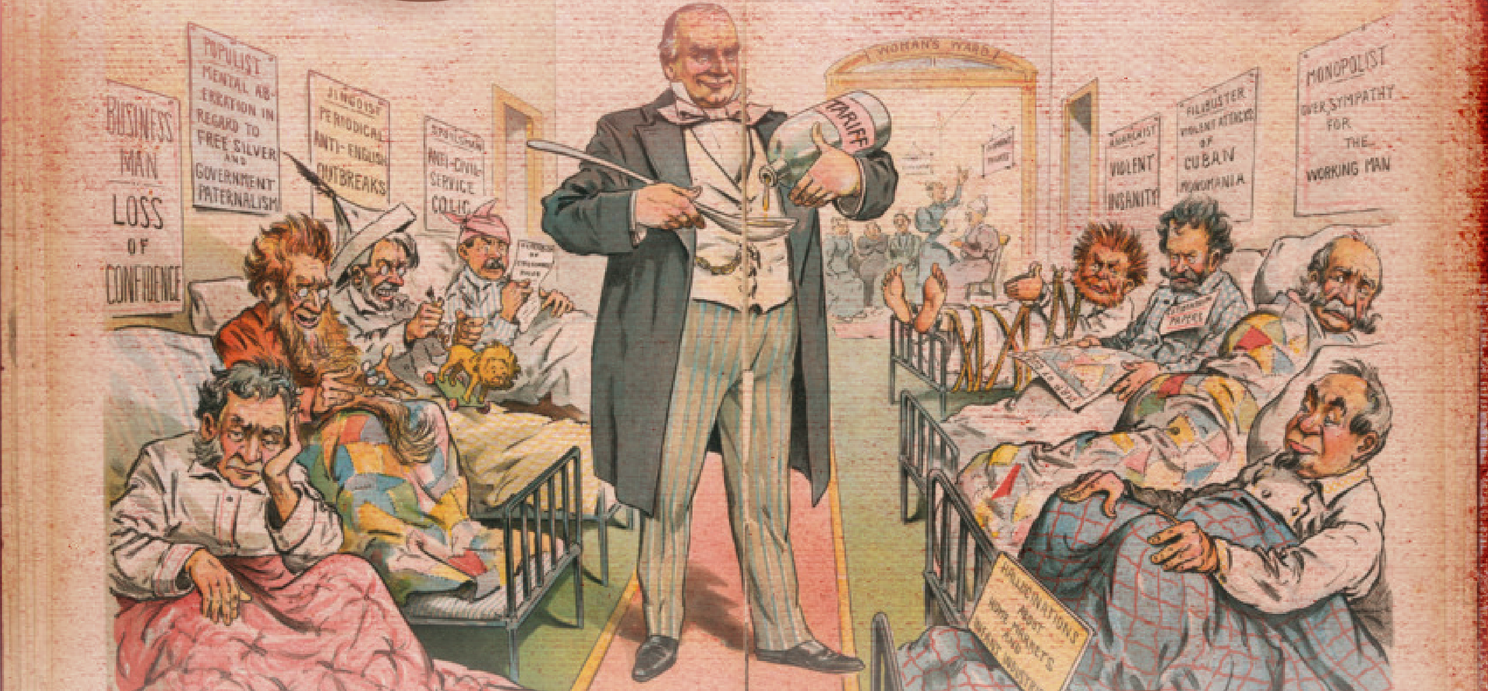
The Tariff Act of 1890 proved devastating for the Republicans. That year, in the United States House of Representatives elections, the party lost nearly half its seats. McKinley was part of that sweep. The *Weekly British Whig*, published in Kingston, Ont., delighted in his demise, writing on Nov. 13, 1890, "William McKinley, the high tariff man, after whom a very obnoxious measure was called, is politically dead. He went to the people for endorsement, and the people have rejected him."

While McKinley and the Republicans sank because of the tariffs, the opposite happened for Canada's Conservatives. In March 1891, Canada held a federal election. While the Liberals under Wilfrid Laurier supported free trade with the United States, the Conservatives used the tariff attack as part of their election campaign. It helped the Conservatives win a majority government, their last until 1911, with 117 seats. It was the last election victory for Macdonald, who died a few months later on June 6, 1891.

History is a circle, and it's coming back around.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: IANDAGNALL COMPUTING/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; GRIP, OCTOBER 11, 1890; LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/C-005327; ILLUS. IN AP101.P7 1897. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION


GRIP
833
U.S.
CLOSED BY ORDER OF McKINLEY
"SAY, BOSS, COULD YOU SHOW ME THE WAY TO THE HOME MARKET?"


PUCK
BUSINESS MAN LOSS OF CONFIDENCE
POPULIST MENTAL ABERRATION IN REGARD TO FREE SILVER AND GOVERNMENT PATERNALISM
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TARIFF
WOMAN'S WARD
ANARCHIST VIOLENT INSANITY
FILIBUSTER VIOLENT ATTACKS OF CUBAN MONOMANIA
MONOPOLIST OVER SYMPATHY FOR THE WORKING MAN
HALLUCINATIONS ABOUT HOME MARKETS AND INFANT INDUSTRIES
HE HAS ONE MEDICINE FOR ALL ILLS

Clockwise from TOP LEFT: William McKinley, photographed c.1898, became the 25th U.S. president in 1897 and served until 1901; a political cartoon published in the Canadian satrical magazine *The Grip* in October 1890 with the caption, "Say, Boss, Could You Show Me the Way to the Home Market?"; a portrait of Sir John A. Macdonald, taken circa 1875 by George Lancefield when Macdonald had just finished his first tenure as prime minister. By the time the McKinley Tariff threatened Canada, Macdonald was finishing his second tenure; a political cartoon from 1897 depitcs President McKinley as a physician dispensing strong tariff 'medicine.' When McKinley was elected president, he furthered his protectionist policies, enacting the 12-year-long Dingley Tariff.

Unspoken

nêhiyawak soldiers bent their language to help secure the Allied victory in the Second World War, but their service is often forgotten

BY **KAYLA MACINNIS**

WHEN their language was useful, it was weaponized. Though their words helped win a war, their contributions remained classified for nearly two decades. And when that same history became politically inconvenient, their legacy disappeared behind a broken hyperlink. This is how colonial amnesia works. One day, Diné (Navajo) code talkers were present on U.S. military websites; the next, following an executive order by President Donald Trump to terminate all federal diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, they were gone.

The pages were restored after public backlash, but this erasure, however brief, raises deeper questions about sovereignty, memory and whose stories are protected and uplifted.

On this side of the colonial border, Canada had its own code talkers. The most well-known was Charles "Checker" Tomkins, a Métis man from Alberta — though his story also remained buried for decades. He and two of his brothers — Peter Tomkins and their half-brother John Smith — were among the nêhiyawak from Alberta and Saskatchewan who were asked to bend their language into a tactical tool the military could use. nêhiyawêwin, the Cree language, is a complex, verb-driven system structured around the concept of wâhkôhtowin, a foundational principle of nêhiyaw natural law that means "everything is related."

Checker's brother, Frank Tomkins, served as a private on the home front during World War II. In the field, the Tomkins brothers transmitted coded messages in nêhiyawêwin to relay sensitive information about aircraft and bombing runs. Although they served in the Canadian military, they

Clockwise from OPPOSITE LEFT: The Tomkins brothers in 1945 (left to right): John Smith, Henry, Peter, Charles and Frank Tomkins; Frank Tomkins and James "Smokey" Tomkins in the documentary *Cree Code Talker*; Diné code talkers, Private First Class Preston Toledo and his cousin, Private First Class Frank Toledo; pakwâtastim (wild horse), a WWII-era Mustang fighter plane.

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE LEFT: COURTESY OF THE MEMORY PROJECT, HISTORICA CANADA; COURTESY OF ALEX LAZAROWICH; © CORBIS/ CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES; IMAGE FROM CHARLES DANIELS PHOTO COLLECTION. SAN DIEGO AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM ARCHIVE

were attached to the American Eighth Air Force and stationed at air bases across England.

“They were placed at different airports,” Frank Tomkins recalled of his brothers. “Then they’d send a message in nêhiyawêwin about how many aircraft, what kinda aircraft was going on this bombing run in England, and the party on the other end would translate it back into English.”

In an interview recorded by the Memory Project, a national archive of veterans’ testimonies, Frank shared a story about the teachings that shaped his family long before they found themselves on the battlefield. Their grandmother was a Plains Cree woman, widow of Chief Poundmaker and niece of Big Bear, a resistance leader during the 1885 North-West Rebellion. She believed in the old ways and passed that knowledge on to her grandsons. One of the things she taught them was a war song, something to sing when their lives were in danger. She didn’t explain it, Frank said. She just told them to remember it.

Later, in a trench under heavy fire, Checker looked up and saw an uncle who had passed away years earlier but now seemed to be “laughing and motioning him to come towards him,” Frank recalled. Checker stood up and walked toward his kin. Moments later, a shell hit the exact spot where he’d been sitting, killing two of his friends. “He believed his uncle saved him,” Frank said. “That’s the Indian way, you might say.”

Because nêhiyawêwin reflects fluidity, relationship and ongoing motion, its logic runs counter to the rigid, hierarchical, object-oriented frameworks of war. With five major regional dialects, nêhiyawêwin isn’t uniform across territories, something that added another layer of complexity for communication and consistency during wartime coding. Since there were no direct translations for the words of modern warfare, the code talkers turned to what the language did hold: a deep relationship with the land. The Spitfire aircraft became iskotêw (fire), the Mustang fighter was called pakwâtastim (wild horse), fighter bombers were called sakimês (mosquito), and a B-17 bomber was encoded as âmow têpakohposâp (bee and 17).

At a time when Indigenous children were **punished** for speaking their languages in residential schools, **nêhiyawêwin** lived and adapted.

At a time when Indigenous children were being punished for speaking their languages in residential schools, nêhiyawêwin lived and adapted, becoming a shield and a lifeline for a country that pushed its speakers to the margins. While the nêhiyawak code talkers demonstrated immense courage and strength, the use of their language in the war also stripped that language of its full cultural context. It became the property of the military, a tactical asset rather than the sacred, relational way of being in the world. The people behind the language were often forgotten even though their words were spoken over the airwaves. Today, the Canadian federal government still has yet to formally recognize its own Indigenous code talkers.

The recent removal of Diné code talkers from U.S. military websites was more than a clerical oversight. It’s a warning. When Indigenous histories are tucked under labels like “diversity and inclusion,” they become framed as peripheral stories rather than central chapters in the history of a nation younger than the peoples and languages it so readily forgets.

Stories like those of Checker Tomkins and his brothers and the many thousands of Indigenous veterans who have served in various conflicts deserve more than a temporary hyperlink that can be erased at any time in the name of historical revisionism. They deserve care, protection and a permanent place in the archive of this land. ❆

Discovery Language is supported by the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages.

Super Scooper

Canada's famous fire-fighting aircraft save landscapes and people around the world

BY **BRIAN OWENS**
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY **ANDY MORA**

When wildfires burn at home and abroad, threatening forests and communities, Canada is there to answer the call with the Canadair CL-415 Super Scooper and its variants. These large yellow planes with huge wingspans scoop up tons of water to dump on the flames, slowing their spread.

The arrival of these Canadian-made aircraft to torched landscapes brings hope and is an important tool for Canadian diplomacy — "one of many resources we can share, either internally or internationally," says Alexandria Jones, communications manager for the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. "It's definitely a sign of continued friendship and collaboration across borders, whether it is the U.S., Mexico or elsewhere."

The most visible and recent example of this international cooperation is the long-standing lease agreement between the government of Quebec and the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Every year since 1994, two Quebec owned planes, along with pilots and crew, are stationed in Los Angeles starting on Sept. 1 and remain there for up to 180 days. This year, in response to the devastating fires in Los Angeles, Quebec sent two additional planes with crew in January.

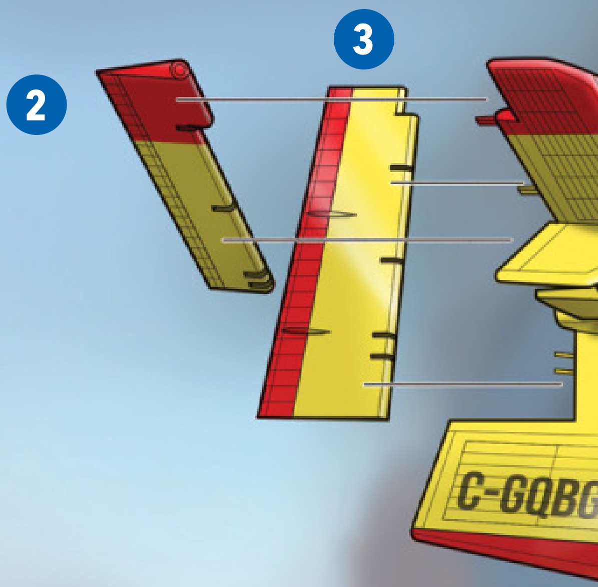
The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre also coordinates fire-fighting resources between Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Costa Rica and Portugal. And mobilizing planes and crews around the world — in soon to be 10 countries plus the European Union — also benefits Canada when it comes time to fight fires in our own vast forests.

"It helps ensure that when Canada needs additional resources, we have these great relationships so that our partners will send people and resources our way," says Jones.

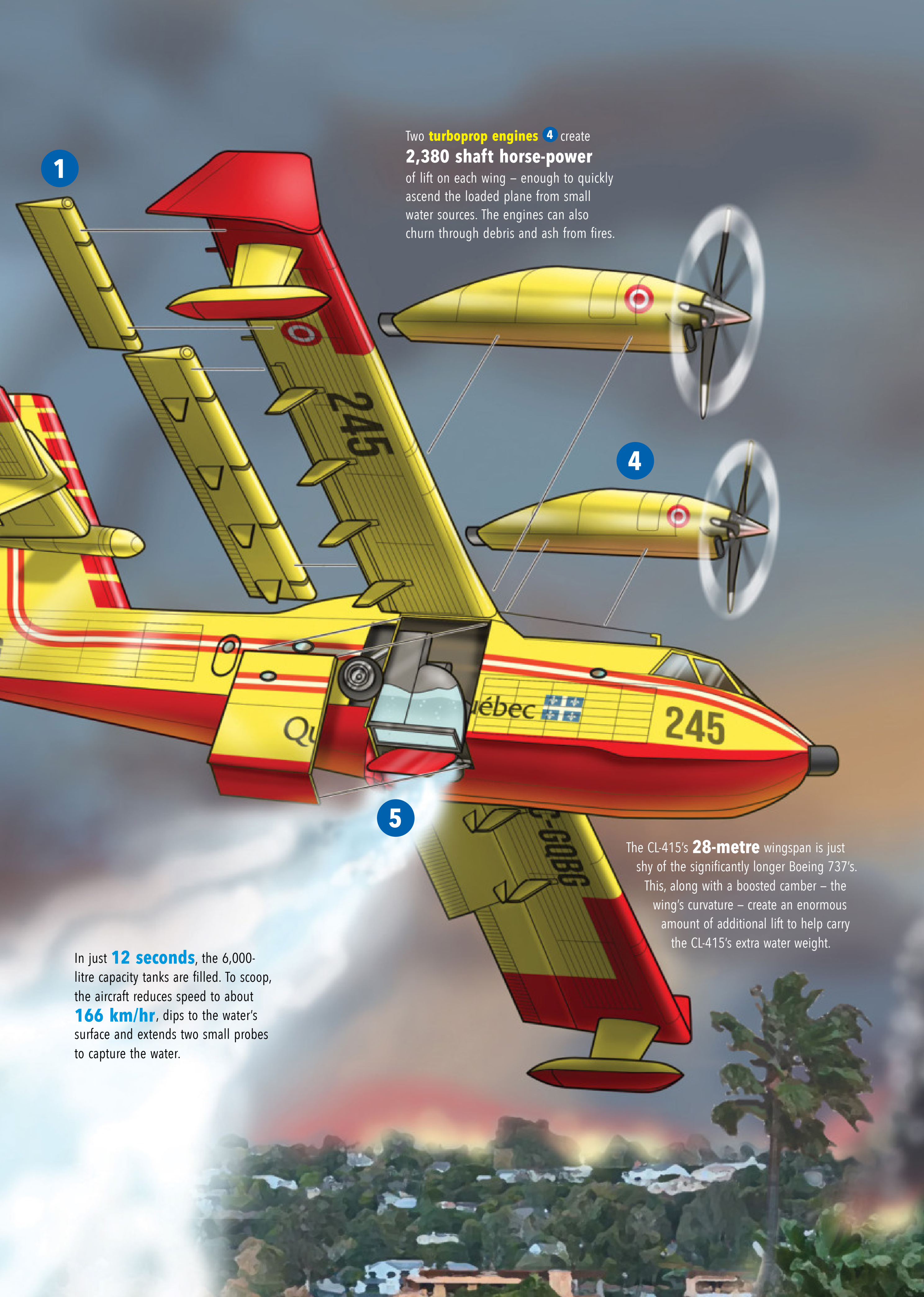
The Super Scoopers are popular around the world because of their unique capabilities, says Jones. The amphibious planes can land on lakes or oceans, dealing with waves up to two metres high, and scoop up a huge amount of water. They then quickly deliver it to places too remote or too dangerous for ground-based firefighting. These daring exploits have cemented the plane's and Canada's legacy as expert firefighters ready to lend a helping hand.

After all, when people are close to a wildfire, it's the "Canadairs" they ask for. ❖

The secret to the **CL-415**'s success is its maneuverability. The 13,000-kilogram plane's super-sized aerodynamic devices, such as the **ailerons** ①, **elevators** ② and a 7.5-square-metre **rudder** ③, allow it to fly lower over fires, turn and decelerate faster, reload from smaller water sources, and make more water drops per day than other fire-fighting aircraft.



When the pilot hits the water drop button, the **drop doors on the keel** ⑤ open and release **6,000 litres** of water in just two seconds. Drops can be made from as low as 30 metres, every few minutes for up to **six hours** at a time.



Two **turboprop engines** ④ create **2,380 shaft horse-power** of lift on each wing – enough to quickly ascend the loaded plane from small water sources. The engines can also churn through debris and ash from fires.

The CL-415's **28-metre** wingspan is just shy of the significantly longer Boeing 737's. This, along with a boosted camber – the wing's curvature – create an enormous amount of additional lift to help carry the CL-415's extra water weight.

In just **12 seconds**, the 6,000-litre capacity tanks are filled. To scoop, the aircraft reduces speed to about **166 km/hr**, dips to the water's surface and extends two small probes to capture the water.

ON THE MAP

Exploring Cartography

Arctic under threat

As international relations heat up, Canada is scrambling to secure its Arctic sovereignty

MAP BY **CHRIS BRACKLEY**
WITH TEXT BY **ROB HUEBERT**

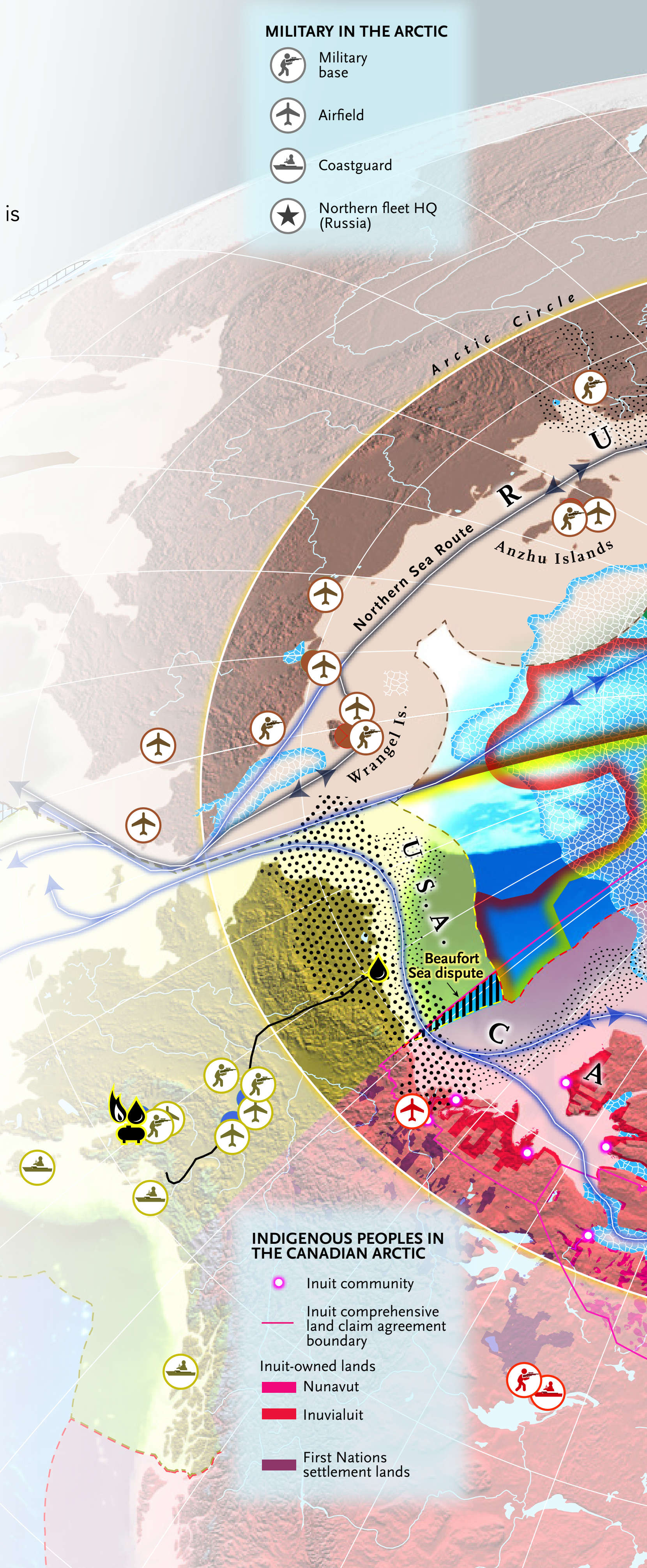
In the recent federal election, both the Liberal and Conservative parties identified threats to our Arctic sovereignty and security as a key issue facing Canada.

While these threats are not new, they've been intensified by Russia's military actions and capabilities in the Arctic region and its war against Ukraine (both of which have been paid for in large part by its Arctic oil and gas production), as well as by China's increased Arctic shipping and its launch of surveillance balloons over the North American Arctic and by the new political challenges of the American administration's threats to annex Canada and Greenland.

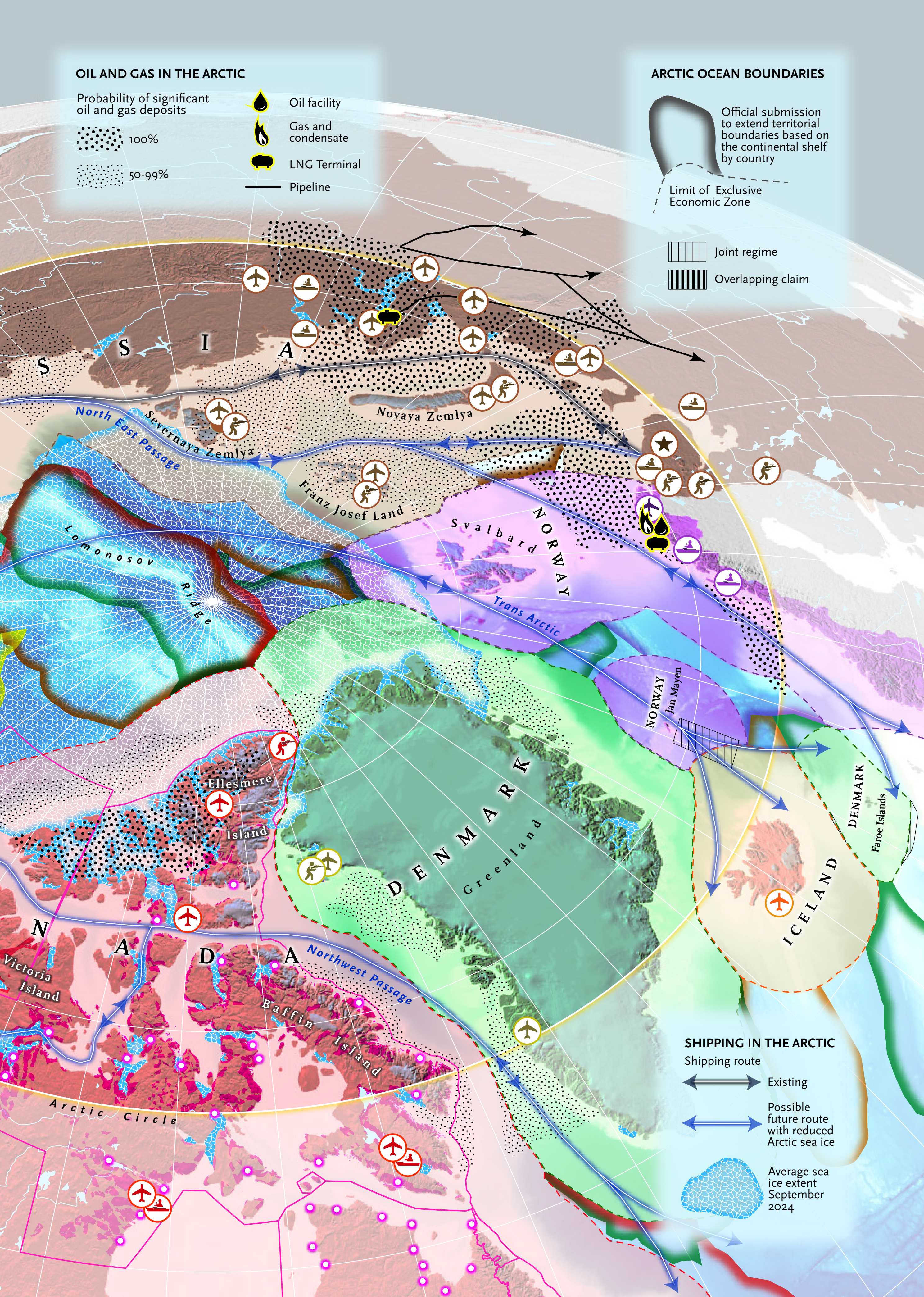
This map shows the location of these threats, which also take place on Inuit Nunangat. It also shows the three key sovereignty challenges facing Canada. First, the maritime boundary that divides the Beaufort Sea is disputed between Canada and the United States. We also disagree with the U.S., and many of our European and Asian allies, over who can use the Northwest Passage for commercial and military traffic. Finally, our maritime claims over the outer limits of our extended continental shelf significantly overlap with those of Russia and Denmark.

In recent decades, Russia's military build-up has driven significant remilitarization in the Arctic. During the Cold War, both sides deployed significant portions of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems in this region. The geography between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and the weapon technology of missiles and bombers meant that if the Soviets were to launch their weapons at North America, it would be over the Arctic. Canada and the United States needed to cooperate to defend against and deter bomber and missile attacks. When the Cold War ended, it was hoped that such capabilities would no longer be needed. But Russia has now modernized most of its Cold War bases to accommodate modern weapons systems, presumably for their possible use in a conflict with western nations.

As Canada rushes to catch up with the rest of the world, can we defend the true north before it's too late? ❂


MILITARY IN THE ARCTIC
Military base
Airfield
Coastguard
★ Northern fleet HQ (Russia)
Arctic Circle
R U
Anzhu Islands
Northern Sea Route
Wrangel Is.
U.S.A.
Beaufort Sea dispute
C A
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC
● Inuit community
Inuit comprehensive land claim agreement boundary
Inuit-owned lands
Nunavut
Inuvialuit
First Nations settlement lands

DATA: EEZS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS: FLANDERS MARINE INSTITUTE. WORLD EEZ V12 AND WORLD EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELVES V2; OIL RESERVES, PIPELINES: "RESOURCES IN THE ARCTIC," NORDREGIO; OIL AND GAS FACILITIES: CURRENT OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION AREAS...MAP. MARINE CONSERVATION IN THE NORWEGIAN ARCTIC. WIENRICH, NICOLE, 2022; MILITARY SITES: "ARCTIC COMPETITION PART TWO," FOREIGN POLICY MAGAZINE, DEC 14, 2020; ARCTIC SEA ROUTES: ARCTIC SEA ROUTES WITH MAIN PORTS AND EEZ MAP. ARCTIC PORTAL. AUGUST 2023; INUIT AREAS AND LANDS: ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CANADA, CANADA.



OIL AND GAS IN THE ARCTIC

Probability of significant oil and gas deposits

- 100%
- 50-99%
- Oil facility
- Gas and condensate
- LNG Terminal
- Pipeline

ARCTIC OCEAN BOUNDARIES

- Official submission to extend territorial boundaries based on the continental shelf by country
- Limit of Exclusive Economic Zone
- Joint regime
- Overlapping claim

SHIPPING IN THE ARCTIC

Shipping route

- Existing
- Possible future route with reduced Arctic sea ice
- Average sea ice extent September 2024

S
S
I
A
North East Passage
Severnaya Zemlya
Novaya Zemlya
Franz Josef Land
Svalbard
NORWAY
Lomonosov Ridge
Trans Arctic
NORWAY
Jan Mayen
DENMARK
Faroe Islands
ICELAND
Ellesmere Island
DENMARK
Greenland
N
A
D
A
Victoria Island
Northwest Passage
Baffin Island
Arctic Circle

THERE IS SOMETHING to see in all directions, if you know what to look for — and Bart Vanderlinde does. Beyond infinite shades of green and ever-changing clouds, Sinkut Mountain, B.C., is a vantage point to find more than beautiful views. Vanderlinde finds fires.

The Sinkut fire lookout is roughly 22 kilometres south of Vanderhoof, B.C., on Saik'uz First Nation territory, at an elevation of almost 1,500 metres. The two-storey building, painted a now-peeling dark green, juts out at the peak of the crag. The top floor features a 360-degree view with windows on all sides and a wraparound balcony. From behind square-rimmed glasses and a bushy grey moustache, wearing cargo shorts and a navy shirt, Vanderlinde, 72, surveys this now familiar landscape.

As a kid, Vanderlinde wanted to be a forest ranger, even if he didn't quite know what that meant. His family had emigrated from Holland to Canada, and Vanderlinde grew up in Fort St. John, B.C., northeast of where he now sits on Sinkut Mountain. At 19 years old, Vanderlinde was offered his first summer job in forestry at the Blueberry fire lookout, near Fort St. John. After fulfilling his childhood dream of working as a forest ranger, Vanderlinde's retirement led him back to where it all started: working as a fire lookout.

"I enjoyed it so much when I was 19 that I said 'why not?'" Vanderlinde

The man on the HILL

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF WATCHING FOR WILDFIRES FROM LOOKOUTS IS FADING AWAY, BUT BART VANDERLINDE WATCHES ON

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PAIGE TAYLOR WHITE**

chuckles. "Eight years later, I'm still here. So much for career planning! Fifty-two years later and I'm still doing the same job." But now Vanderlinde is the last regular fire lookout in British Columbia.

Since Vanderlinde first set his eyes on the horizon, much has changed. The lookout was built in 1927, when fire detection and technology were drastically different than they are today. British Columbia used to have some 300 active lookouts in a vast network across the province. Fire watchers sat atop these mountain seats, scanning the landscape for the faintest blur of smoke or glimmer of flame.

The Sinkut lookout was remodelled in the 1950s, and minor updates continue as needed. Its location and track record of finding fires is why it is the only regularly staffed lookout in British Columbia. Beyond recent technological advancements, the cost of upkeep to the hundreds of lookouts scattered around the province and the safety of lookout personnel are among the reasons why active fire lookouts are fading into obscurity.

Vanderlinde now represents one of the last vestiges not just of fire watching but of a way of life. Aside from efficiency, the job is also about pride, he explains. If there is a fire in your area as a lookout, "you'd better be the first one to report it, or you sure want to be. You don't want

someone to beat you to the punchline asking, 'what were you doing? Sleeping?'"

VANDERLINDE carries a machete in one hand and bear spray in the other as he leaves his stoop on the hill to venture to the nearby outhouse. These precautions are both necessary and part of what could seem a quirky lifestyle, as Vanderlinde would be the first to tell you. His education is from the school of hard knocks. Aside from nearby wildlife, he knows the public road could lead anyone to the lookout at all hours of the day or night.

Vanderlinde's life on the lookout during fire season (usually late June to the end of August) typically runs 14 days at a time, depending on weather, with quick stints home to Prince George where he lives with his wife. During that fire-watching fortnight, Vanderlinde works and lives at the lookout.

In each direction, Vanderlinde can see as far as 80 to 90 kilometres across a majestic expanse of forest, lakes and distant slopes. Between the lookout and the horizon, visibility varies depending on the surrounding terrain, with certain blind spots that fall into valleys.

From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Vanderlinde scans the sky on behalf of the B.C. wildfire service, playing a piece in the multifaceted puzzle of ire detection. The weather doesn't care much for these hours, and the job can extend beyond the clock. Vanderlinde doesn't mind though. "I just like being outdoors."

While spotting a fire's exact location is what the role comes down to, a lot of his time is spent daydreaming. In between the long stretches of silence, the job is about "bearing and distance, bearing and distance," Vanderlinde says — taking bearings,

Paige Taylor White (she/her) is a queer documentary photographer and photojournalist based on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations.

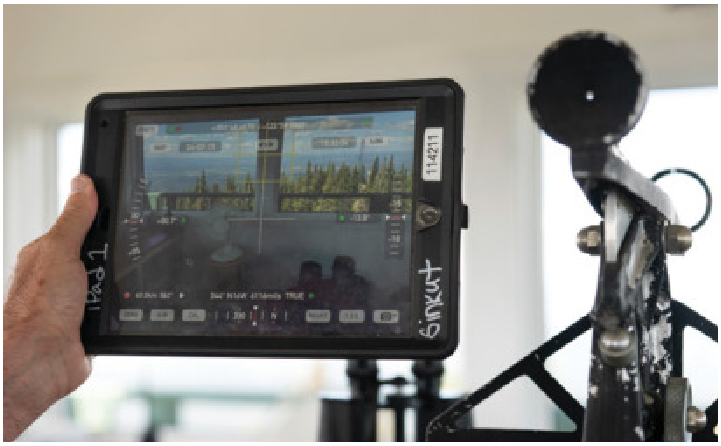
PREVIOUS and OPPOSITE: Bart Vanderlinde watches for fires from Sinkut lookout, where he lives (BOTTOM RIGHT) and works in fortnight stints during fire season. Vanderlinde knows the subtle difference between dust on a forest service road (RIGHT) and smoke.

measuring distance and tracing coordinates onto a map. To break up the quiet, every four hours Vanderlinde calls in for a safety check and sends along weather information like relative humidity, temperature, wind speed and barometric pressure.

The job of a lookout isn't to stare mindlessly into the distance, Vanderlinde explains, but knowing what to look for. "The trick is that you're looking for something different. You're not looking for smoke; you're looking for something different on the landscape." Knowing his surroundings intimately is vital. He needs to be familiar with nearby forest service roads where vehicles visibly kick up clouds of dust along the road. Knowing the sometimes subtle difference between dust, vapour and smoke could be the difference between a genuine and a false alarm.

Several years ago, "all of a sudden, my arm got really warm and the hair started sticking up from static. You could smell the ozone," recalls Vanderlinde. Knowing lightning produces ozone, he stumbled indoors. Indeed, as he fell through the doorway, Vanderlinde saw a flash from the corner of his eye as the lower part of Sinkut Mountain was struck by lightning in the wake of a storm.

One of Vanderlinde's main responsibilities is to monitor the skies when storms are forecast, in case of lightning-caused fires. According to the B.C. wildfire service, from 2012 to 2022 around 58 per cent of fires were sparked by lightning, while the rest were caused by people. The Sinkut lookout is equipped with light-



ning rods and surrounded by wire at the base that serves as a grounding mechanism in case of a lightning strike. But now that B.C.'s wildfire service subscribes to and relies on a lightning detection service from Environment Canada, it requires lightning lookouts less and less.

Once Vanderlinde finds something noteworthy in the distance, he pulls out the binoculars passed down to him by his grandfather. Vanderlinde prefers these to the newer pair he has stowed away in his bag for backup.

When he identifies a fire, the next step is to work out the exact location of the fire and relay that information to the wildfire service. He determines the location of the fire using the fire finder or using a theodolite app on his iPad (although he prefers the old-fashioned way). To the untrained eye, the fire finder tool looks like an antique: a metal disc welded onto a wooden cabinet with a scope on top. It is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the lookout. At the base of the tool is a 360-degree map with Sinkut lookout marked at the centre.

The job of a **lookout** isn't to stare **mindlessly** into the distance.

Vanderlinde rotates the eyepiece above the map, lining up the fire in the crosshairs. He then finds the bearing on the fire finder map and estimates the distance, which he double checks on a second nearby map. After noting the exact location, he relays the information by radio.

Outside his 12-hour shifts, Vanderlinde's time on the lookout is spent much the same as when he's on duty. On the first floor, there's a stove, fridge and cupboard of snacks currated by his wife, including Dutch cookies to honour his family's heritage. Vanderlinde says Sinkut's electricity is a lookout luxury, along with wi-fi and cell service. In the past, there were few entertainment options beyond reading a good book and radio

OPPOSITE, **Clockwise from TOP LEFT:** Vanderlinde takes a break to cook dinner on the ground floor of the lookout; the road to the lookout is accessible by a 4x4 vehicle; Vanderlinde's fire weather meter; and his theodolite app. **THIS PAGE:** Hikers often venture up to the lookout to take in the views, see the building, and meet Bart.

chatter with other lookouts from time to time.

Back in the day, Vanderlinde says, you'd be dropped off to work at your lookout with only yourself and a lunchbox radio. "It used to be, when all the lookouts were about 30 kilometres apart, an unwritten rule after 8 o'clock at night when things were quiet… the lookout guys would chatter. It would be the old telegraph line type of thing." If you couldn't hear the guy two lookouts away, Vanderlinde explains, the guy in the middle would relay the message back and forth. "Now it's cell phones."

The 2023 season was the last one Vanderlinde had another regular lookout to communicate with — Dianne Seyferth, 67, who was posted at the Kuyakuz lookout, a fly-in only fire tower roughly 80 kilometres south of Sinkut Mountain. "Right from the start you knew she was a lookout person. There is this mentality or something there," he says of Seyferth. "You can tell people who have done this job before… and you can tell who is good at it too, just by the way that they talk."

Seyferth passed away in the summer of 2023, and Kuyakuz lookout has been vacant since. It's uncertain whether a new regular fire watcher will be brought in.

Last season marked Vanderlinde's eighth season working at the Sinkut Lookout into his retirement. "There is nobody else out there doing the job. It gets… not *lonely*, but lonely in the fact that there is nobody to relate to," he says, reminiscing about

Vanderlinde scans the forest for evidence of fire from the Sinkut lookout (TOP LEFT). Using the metal fire finder tool (ABOVE), along with a map (BOTTOM LEFT), Vanderlinde can calculate a fire's exact coordinates.

the changes he's seen over his career. When asked about the rising concerns of climate change and its impact, Vanderlinde notes that the higher intensity of fires and greater areas being burned are significant. Life on the lookout has given him lots of time to look for fires, and even more time to contemplate his life.

Evidence of this musing is tucked away in the corner of the lookout in a Prince George Fire Centre notebook. Inside is a list of handwritten prompts and memories that Vanderlinde intends to pass on to his grandchildren. From a near-death experience working in aerial firefighting to family adventures in Hawaii, Vanderlinde has many tales to share of a life that hasn't much bothered with the distinction between work and play.

On the second-floor work desk, next to an old-school radio, sits a Bluetooth speaker that Vanderlinde pairs with his phone. Laughing, the man on the hill says he knows the perfect song (by the Beatles andlater covered by Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66, Vanderlinde's favourite version) that encapsulates life on the lookout:

Day after day
Alone on a hill
The man with the foolish grin
is keeping perfectly still.

North Star

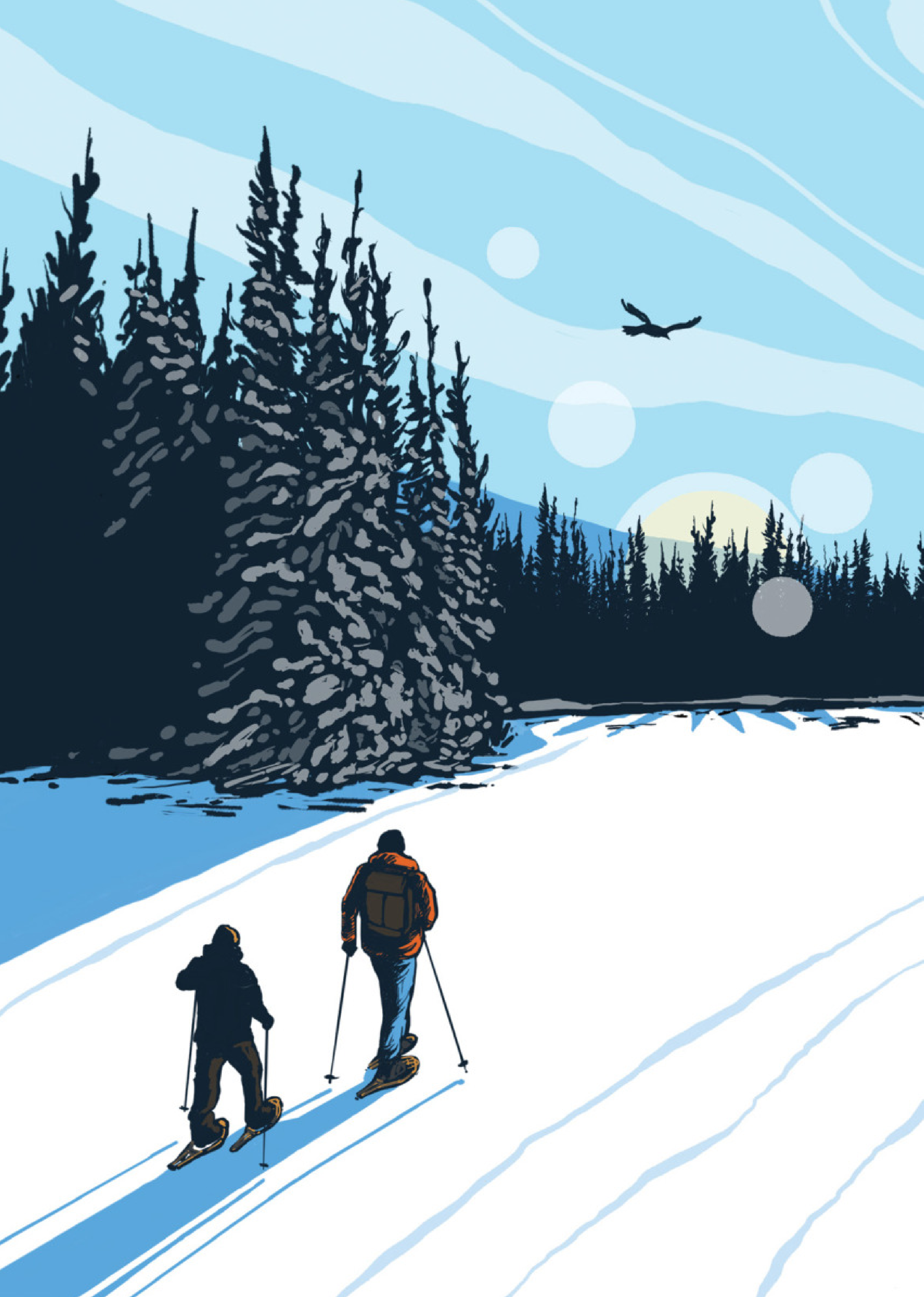
REFLECTIONS ON CANADA AND BEING CANADIAN

BY **WADE DAVIS**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **KERRY HODGSON**

THE STRONGEST MEMORIES of my youth in Montreal are of ice storms roaring out of the Arctic, snapping oaks and maples at the base. I remember boys playing hockey on the St. Lawrence River, slapshots disappearing over the ice floes, the black spire of the Catholic church dissolving in the winter winds that turned sky and land into an infinite whiteness without contour or relief. On school mornings, the sound of snow creaking beneath my boots. Stars sparkling through the branches of the giant elm trees that in those years still thrived in the neighbourhoods of old Quebec. The scars on the thighs of the teacher who taught me to paddle, his eyes still ablaze from the time he had fought off the bear and survived.

This is something that all Canadians know: the presence of the wild even in the heart of the cities. In St. John's, humpback whales can be seen from the height of the bluffs that shelter the harbour. In Vancouver, salmon spawn in neighbourhood streams and black bears come down out of the mountains to feast upon them. The city spreads in the shadow of snow-crested peaks that run up the coast 1,500 kilometres to the Yukon. Montreal carries the weight of a province more than three times the size of France.

Space, land and winter — these are the overwhelming realities of Canada. The numbers tell an impressive story. A country 7,500 kilometres across, spanning six time zones and encompassing nearly 10 million square kilometres of the Earth. A land of two million lakes, with 30 per cent of the world's fresh water. A nation that could toss England over its shoulder and the English would never find it.



Demographers are forever pointing out that 90 per cent of Canada's population resides within 200 kilometres of our border with the United States. But turn the map on its side, and you'll see the real story, the most compelling feature of Canada's geography. The distance from our southern border to the northern tip of Ellesmere Island is nearly 5,000 kilometres, a greater distance than that between New York and Los Angeles. Within that immense space is a forest three times the size of Colombia, and beyond, an expanse of tundra larger than western Europe. The territories of the North, a homeland to the Inuit and First Nations, mostly unknown land to the rest of us, make up 40 per cent of Canada, an area 16 times the size of the entire United Kingdom.

This depth is what makes Canada so enticing — the idea that at the southern border you can start walking north and disappear into a land that rolls on to some impossibly distant shore. The sense that a journey, once initiated, need never end.

ONE WAY TO APPRECIATE THE ROLE of landscape in the Canadian imagination is through the writings of Frederick Philip Grove. He was an odd character: German by birth, a bigamist and a dandy who escaped debt in Berlin, changed his name upon landing in Canada in 1909 and found his home among the cacophony of immigrant voices — Swedish, Ukrainian, Icelandic, German — brought west by the railroad to Winnipeg. His life was an intricate web of fact and fiction. When young, he sought fame through personal excess, sexual and scandalous, and yet, ironically, in time and with age he achieved it through solitude.

His memoir, *Over Prairie Trails*, published in 1922, tells of the trips he made one winter between the school where he taught and his family, who lived some 50 kilometres away on the Manitoba prairie. Grove wrote as a form of meditation, his stories intended only for the eyes and ears of his wife and child, to be read aloud by the evening fire during the weeks of his absence.

Each of Grove's stories, each journey, is unique. There is movement as in a dream, the poetry of silence as runners pass over soft snow. There is the terror of winter storms, the temperatures dropping so low the leather halters snap and human breath freezes instantly with a crackling sound like the voices of stars. Grove tells of wondrous passages through daylight into the shadow of a winter moon, of marsh fogs fading to reveal the northern lights. He tells of desperate journeys with injured children and dying women across landscapes shaped by snow and wind, where the carcasses of dead animals form dark outlines on the prairie. For Grove, nature is not an entity but a condition, something to be endured rather than heralded.

> "You don't get through those brutal winters without building up a sturdy resilience. And Canadians can **FIGHT AND SKATE** at the same time."

Grove experienced Canada not as a wilderness but as a neighbourhood where humans and nature had long ago come to terms with one another. Those terms involved a set of relationships to the land that demanded the luxury of space. Within that vast territory of the spirit, in the solitude of the prairie, he discovered what it meant to be of this place.

For the First Peoples of Canada, this sense of place informs every aspect of existence. I once met in the Yukon a Sekani Elder who was completely confounded by a missionary's notion of heaven. He couldn't believe anyone could be expected to give up smoking, drinking, swearing, carousing and all the things that made life worth living to go to a place where they didn't allow animals. "No caribou?" he would say in complete astonishment. He couldn't conceive of a world without wild things.

For many years, first in the hunting camps of the Spatsizi in Tahltan territory in northern British Columbia, and later at our home on Ealue Lake, I recorded stories from a Gitxsan Elder, Alex Jack. Born in 1906 in Hazleton on the Skeena River, Alex as a young boy moved with his family to Bear Lake; his father had been a good friend of Simon Gunanoot, the legendary trapper outlaw who had found sanctuary in the Groundhog country, lands known today as the Sacred Headwaters, birthplace of the three great salmon rivers, the Skeena, Stikine and Nass. The traditional stories were all parables played out against the landscape, as We-gyet, the trickster transformer of Gitxsan lore, revealed through his folly the proper and moral way for a people to live.

When I asked Alex how long it took to complete the cycle of We-gyet tales, he replied enthusiastically that as a youngster he had asked his father that very question. To find out, they set out on snowshoes in March, a time of good ice, walking the length

of Bear Lake, telling the stories as they went along. “All the way there,” Alex exclaimed, “and all the way back, and the story not even halfway done!” To measure the duration of such epic lore, it was not enough to set a time piece. One had to move through geography, step by step, exposed to the very elements, the wind and the cold, the sibilant tones of the wild that had given birth to the mythic narrative.

Just as the land nurtures, so it can destroy. A friend hunting in the canyon-lands of the Stikine was enchanted by the way ravens spun above him in descending vortices, until learning from a Tahltan Elder that this is how the birds kill mountain goats, disorienting their prey until the animals fall from the bluffs to their deaths. When passing an old camp in the forest, Alex Jack would never say, “This is where we lived.” Selecting his words with care as one does when speaking a foreign language — English was his fifth after Gitxsan, Sekani, Tahltan and Cree — he would always say, “This is where we survived.”

Mike Jones, a close friend, was as good in the bush as anyone I knew. But one day, just before Christmas some 40 years ago, he made a mistake, leaving shelter underdressed only to fall through the ice on his trapline at Bowser Lake. Sixty feet of snow fell, preventing the Mounties from getting into the valley until spring, when they found Mike’s body. His dog Chinook, having somehow survived the winter, was found 35 pounds underweight in Mike’s camp at Dead Man’s Point, in a cabin that had once belonged to Simon Gunanoot. When I wrote about the tragedy for an American magazine, the editors in Chicago refused to believe that such snowfall was possible, even when presented with a corroborating letter from the RCMP in Stewart. They ran the essay, substituting inches for feet. The depth and drama of Canada was beyond their imaginings.

In the United States outside of Alaska, the farthest you can get away from a maintained road is 30 kilometres. In the northwest quadrant of British Columbia, an area the size of Oregon, there is one road, a narrow ribbon of tarmac that runs north to the Yukon along the flank of the coastal mountains. Some 30,000 tourists run the Colorado River every year as it flows through the Grand Canyon. No raft has ever made it through the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, Canada's greatest canyon. Yosemite is visited each year by the equivalent of the entire population of Los Angeles. When I worked as a park ranger in the Spatsizi, a roadless expanse more than twice the size of Yosemite, my formal job description was "wilderness assessment and public relations." In a three-month season, my partner and I encountered perhaps 20 visitors.

Nowhere is this sense of space more powerful and complete than in the Arctic. The eerie solitude of the Franklin graves on Beechey Island, the grey wooden planks, the grey stones, the foreshore merging with the grey mist and the dark ocean. A twilight moon rising over the coast of Ellesmere, pink and rose coloured on the water. The ice of Smith Sound luring one north into the vice leading to the polar sea. And yet, in the midst of such solitude, there is so much life, in the water and on the wing.

Every summer, in the fortnight leading up to the solstice, the Inuit families of Arctic Bay make camp on a gravel beach at Cape Crauford, on the western shore of Admiralty Inlet,

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the largest fiord on Earth, a vast inland sea that cleaves the northern shore of Baffin Island. There, beneath the dark cliffs of the Brodeur Peninsula, on a promontory overlooking the richest body of water in the Arctic, they await the return of some 17 million marine mammals and birds that migrate through the open waters of Lancaster Sound. The vast landscape absorbs even such multitudes, and the hunters must wait, hovering along the floe edge where the ice meets the sea, listening for the breath of the belugas and narwhals.

One evening, while visiting the encampment, I came upon a small cross marking the grave of a woman who died delivering a child. Asked about her fate, my friend Olayuk, without looking up from his work, said simply, “She decided to have a baby.”

Such lack of sentiment confused and horrified early explorers. But what the British, in particular, failed to grasp was that in the Arctic, no other attitude was possible. The Inuit, a people of patience and resilience, laughed in the face of starvation and confronted tragedy with fatalistic indifference because they had no choice. In any Inuit community or hunting camp, the most powerful individual is invariably the person who speaks the least. There are no swear words in Inuktitut; one expresses disapproval by saying nothing.

AS CANADIANS WE LIVE IN A WORLD of multiple voices, multiple pasts. For most of our history, ours was a mercantile economy based on a fashion statement, the beaver hat. For its first 240 years, what would become Canada was not a settler society; it became such only in the mid-19th century. Until the building of the railroad, our transportation system was the lakes and rivers; we travelled by canoe. The early French and later the Scots were by no means kind to Indigenous communities, but they never set out to slaughter them. Alliances with First Nations were essential to a trade that, from the start, depended on their knowledge and skills. The fur traders did not murder the people, as author John Ralston Saul quips; they married them, and in doing so moved up in the world.

CANADA IS A MOSAIC because our geography denies any other possibility. Our landscape is a map of dreams, a mystic endowment essential to our identity.

Mercifully, even as the nation reckons with a complex past, not to mention a troubled present, Indigenous people are still here, in ways stronger than ever, their voices very much part of a national dialogue that will determine the future of the country. The path ahead will be long, but the fact that Canada has embraced the challenge of reconciliation is remarkable. Few nations would have the courage or decency to do so. That this collective journey — difficult, costly and painful — has drawn political support across the country speaks to the character of ordinary Canadians: wranglers and guides in the mountains of the West, fishers working the nets in the salt chuck off the coast of Nova Scotia, trappers who disappear with the frost into the forests of Saskatchewan, prospectors scratching for gold from Labrador to the Yukon. All those who live on the trails of the Rockies, in Gaspé, by the lakes and streams of Ontario’s woodlands and across the limitless tundra — immigrant children of the world, but Canadians all, drawn together in a landscape whose very indifference breeds tolerance and respect.

The world is in Canada, as Prime Minister Mark Carney has said, and Canada is the world. Vancouver is as much a part of Asia as it is a city of North America. Fully half of those living in Toronto were born outside of Canada. In the Toronto suburb of Scarborough, the school district has students speaking 126 languages. Montreal is so thoroughly bilingual that a new language is emerging as young people move effortlessly between French and English.

Former prime minister Joe Clark described Canada as a community of communities. Fogo Island innkeeper Zita Cobb, who in her grace and generosity embodies the spirit of Newfoundland, counters that we are a place of places, with culture being but the localized response to the power of landscape, the whispered messages of the wild, of which there are so many in a nation so vast. Within British Columbia, a family driving north from Vancouver to Prince George, a distance of 800 kilometres, passes through more distinct languages than would be encountered by a traveler moving overland from Moscow to Madrid. Canada is a mosaic, Zita would say, because our geography denies any other possibility, as it always has.

Our landscape is a map of dreams, a mystic endowment as essential to our identity and destiny as the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms that made us the nation we have become. Our legal system, in the words of former chief justice Beverley McLachlin, “represents our desire to be a fair country, our expectations as Canadians to be treated with respect as equals, both in our rights and our fundamental human dignity.” The full measure of a nation embraces both the actions of a people and the quality of their aspirations, the nature of the metaphors that propel their lives.

Our national motto may not be much of a slogan, certainly nothing to inspire revolution, but “peace, order and good government” is precisely what we’ve had since the birth of the nation. Asked how Canada will be remembered 150 years from now, former prime minister Brian Mulroney replied, “Fair. Now there was a country.”

CANADA WORKS because of our social contract, the bonds of community, our trust in each other and our institutions.

None of this came about by chance. Canada works because of our social contract, the bonds of community, our trust in each other and our institutions, our health care system in particular, with hospitals that cater to the medical needs of the collective, not the individual, and certainly not the private investor who views every hospital bed as a rental property. To be Canadian is to understand that the measure of wealth in a civilized nation is not the currency accumulated by the lucky few, but rather the strength and resonance of social relations and the bonds of reciprocity that connect all people in common purpose.

British travel writer Jan Morris once remarked that in Canada you could "drown in niceness." She had bumped into someone in the streets of Vancouver and been astonished that the person had said, "I'm sorry." Jan didn't understand that in Canada "I'm sorry" is less an apology than a mantra. It's a way of saying: "Look, you and I live in this impossibly vast and icebound country, and you did not want to hit me, and I did not want to be hit by you, and we live in a civil society where I need you as much as you need me, and neither of us wants any trouble, and so I'm sorry." One does not apologize as much as share regret for the awkwardness of the moment.

Not three months before his death, Martin Luther King spoke of Canada's place in the firmament of freedom. "Deep in our history of struggle," he said, "Canada was the North Star. The Negro slave, denied education, de-humanized, imprisoned on cruel plantations, knew that far to the north a land existed where a fugitive slave, if he survived the horrors of the journey, could find freedom. The legendary Underground Railroad started in the South and ended in Canada ... Our spirituals... were often codes. We sang of 'heaven' that awaited us, and the slave masters listened in innocence, not realizing that we were not speaking of the hereafter. Heaven was the word for Canada, and the Negro sang of the hope that his escape on the Underground Railroad would carry him there. One of our spirituals, 'Follow the Drinking Gourd,' ... contained directions for escape. The gourd was the Big Dipper, and the North Star to which its handle pointed gave the celestial map that directed the flight to the Canadian border."

To a remarkable extent, Canada has both internalized its values and successfully carried them into the world, with an impact out of all proportion to the size of our population, the scale of our economy or the strength of our military. As a founding member of the United Nations, one of the original 51 nations to sign the UN Charter in 1945, Canada arguably invented international peacekeeping, with Lester Pearson leading the way in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis, for which he was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize. Canada played a pivotal role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the foundational document that in 1948 distilled the very dream of the United Nations, was written by a Canadian, John Peters Humphrey. Pierre Trudeau, a liberal prime minister, led the way on nuclear disarmament. A decade on, Brian Mulroney, a conservative, rallied the world against apartheid.

Canada is a nation committed to peace. But not for a moment should this commitment be misunderstood. Only a bully could view civility, generosity, humility and kindness as signs of weakness. Only a bone spur warrior with no knowledge of history could

remain blind to the strength that lies at the core of the Canadian character. That we fail to define freedom as the right to own a personal arsenal of weaponry does not imply that as a people we don't know how to fight. Quite to the contrary.

We have never lost a war. In 1774, when the people of Quebec did not respond to a letter from the Continental Congress inviting them to join the rebellion, the Americans dispatched an army of liberation, an invasion that ended in their own humiliation and disaster. Benjamin Franklin travelled to Montreal in 1776 to intercede directly with the French Canadians, who had every reason, he assumed, to hate the British and join the revolution. He too was rebuffed. A generation later, Canadians joined British forces as they burned Washington to the ground.

Canada's very identity as an independent state, free of the shadow of the British empire, was forged by its fighting forces, the martial skills of its soldiers in the agonies of the Great War. In April 1915, at Ypres, when the Germans attacked using poison gas for the first time, the Canadians alone held the Allied line. At the Somme in 1916, we fought for four months; the boys of Newfoundland perished in an hour. The spring of 1917 found the Canadian Corps in the shadow of Vimy Ridge. The Germans had seized the heights in 1914 and repulsed every subsequent British and French attack. On Easter Monday, the Canadians, fighting together as a single force for the first time, went over the top. Within three days, Vimy Ridge was theirs.

For the rest of the war, Canadians served as the shock troops for the Allied cause. In August 1918, we spearheaded the offensive at Amiens, the battle that turned the tide on the Western Front. It was the beginning of Canada's Hundred Days, a nonstop engagement as the Allied forces, with the Canadian Corps in the vanguard, pushed the Germans east until their final surrender. The carnage continued until the end. The guns fired until the eleventh hour. One of the last Allied soldiers to die was a Canadian private, George Lawrence Price, killed two minutes before the armistice went into effect.

A generation later, it would be the same story in Hitler's war. On D-Day, the Canadians landing at Juno Beach pressed further inland than either the British or American forces on their flanks. Only the Americans at Omaha Beach suffered higher casualties. And we fought for three years before the Americans showed up.

ELBOWS UP, as every Canadian knows, is not a defensive position, let alone a posture of weakness.

When asked recently about American challenges to Canada's sovereignty, Graydon Carter, a Canadian and for many years editor-in-chief of *Vanity Fair*, replied, "I think Canadians should take this lunatic threat seriously. By the same token, Trump should take Canadian resistance every bit as seriously. Beneath that affable, welcoming exterior, Canadians are remarkably tough. You don't get through those brutal winters without building up a sturdy resilience. And Canadians can fight and skate at the same time."

ELBOWS UP, AS EVERY CANADIAN knows, is not a defensive position, let alone a posture of weakness. I learned to skate at three and had my first hospitalizing injury at five; my career ended with a slapshot to the head at 15. Hockey was my life, and for many of us it remains our most powerful metaphor.

In 2016, when I was appointed to the Order of Canada, it was my immense good fortune to share the ceremonial moment, seated with my cohort of 50 recipients in alphabetical order at Rideau Hall, with the late Bob Cole, the legendary CBC announcer of Hockey Night in Canada. There was a strong feeling that we were not being singled out for recognition as much as the nation itself was being honoured through the remarkable collection of citizens in that room. It was very Canadian, as was the sense many of us shared that somebody must have made a mistake in adding our names to the list of honorees. I certainly felt this way, and I could tell that Mr. Cole did as well.

Making small talk, I asked him about the essential skills necessary to do his job. He replied that one needed five octaves in their voice. I was delighted but confused. Then he explained. The lowest tone was to welcome people to the broadcast. The highest octave naturally was reserved for a goal or a great save. But what of the other three?

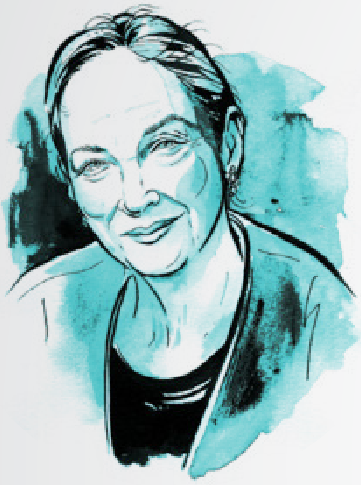
With an actual twinkle in his eye, he replied, "to bring alive on a radio crackling with static the fastest game in the world to a lonely trapper on the banks of the Yukon River, bathing in the glow of the northern lights." Tell me that this wonderful, kind, generous and deeply humble man did not deserve our country's highest civilian honour.

Elbows up, Mr. Cole, wherever you are. ❄

BEING CANADIAN

OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS, TV show *Canada Files* has asked remarkable Canadians: "what does being Canadian mean to you?" Although the responses are personal, specific and different, they reflect themes and ideas of Canada that are thoughtful and useful — especially at this critical time.

Valerie Pringle



ROSALIE **ABELLA**

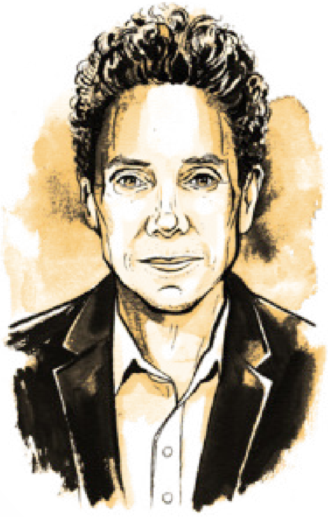
FORMER SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

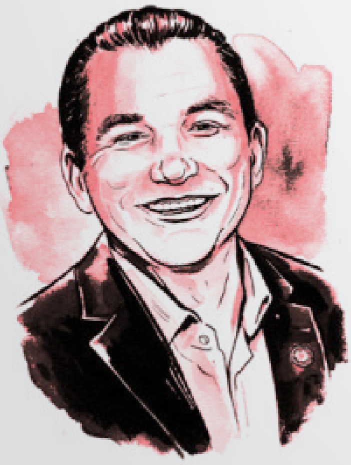
Where else could this have happened? This journey. Canada let us in. They let us be who we wanted to be. They let us be more than we thought we could, or that people thought we could or should be. Canada gave us everything. And I can't think of another country where I or the people I love could have been ourselves as fully. So I love this country. I don't think there's another country in the world like it. And I want it to stay true to what it is: to the country it is, especially since 1982 when we got the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and really grew up.

MALCOLM **GLADWELL**

AUTHOR AND PODCASTER

All of my family are immigrants to Canada. It was the country that welcomed us without reservation and that gave us opportunity. That made my mom feel like she was at home, that educated me extraordinarily well.

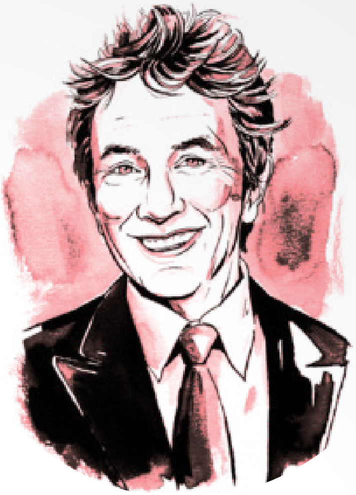




WAB **KINEW**

PREMIER OF MANITOBA

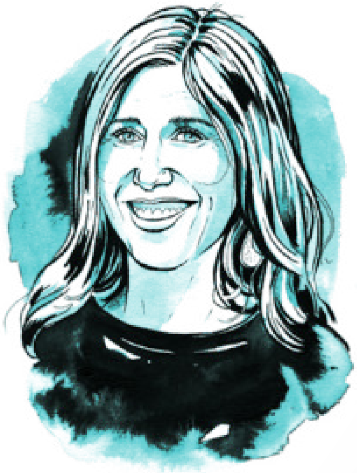
As an Indigenous person, there's always a pressure to account for the terrible impacts of the past. And I would just say that, for me, being Canadian means never forgetting but also being free from being defined by that and saying that I fully embrace being part of this country. I love this country and I love the fact that my kids and I have so much opportunity. And so I am a patriot and I love Canada, and being a Canadian means embracing that in all its ups and downs, during the tough times as well as the proud moments. It means believing in something positive and big that we could do together.



MARTIN **SHORT**

ACTOR AND COMEDIAN

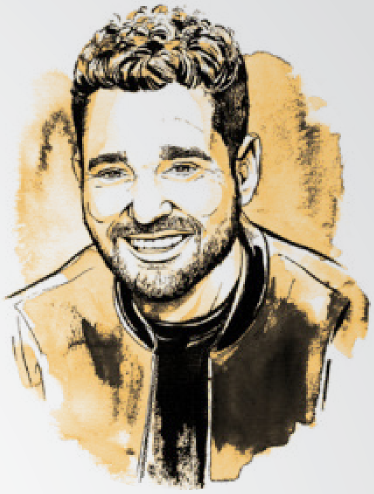
I think Canada is kind of the middle sibling of three siblings. The beautiful England, the sexy U.S., and we're this — maybe our confidence isn't as much as the other two — but we have such soul and such wisdom. And we learn from everything around us.



SILKEN **LAUMANN**

OLYMPIC ROWER

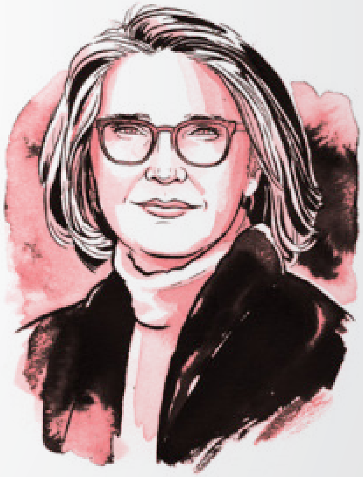
Being Canadian is tied to the land for me, and the water. And secondly, I think of the word "freedom." I've been very fortunate as a woman particularly to explore sport, to explore my potential in so many avenues. I've been given the freedom to do that and I never take that for granted. And we have to, as a country and a people, continue to value and fight for that.



MICHAEL **BUBLÉ**

MUSICIAN

Am I like the most *Canadian* Canadian? I am, aren't I? The most amazing thing that ever happened was sitting on Zoom watching my wife — this gorgeous, proud Argentinian woman — give her oath and become Canadian. And I cried so hard.



LOUISE **PENNY**

AUTHOR

Oh, every day I am so proud. I am relieved probably even more than proud to be a Canadian. What a great country it is, isn't it? It has everything. It has democracy. It has freedom of speech. Gun controls. We have a social safety net — that is, at times, of course, frayed. No place is perfect. And we have a lot to learn.

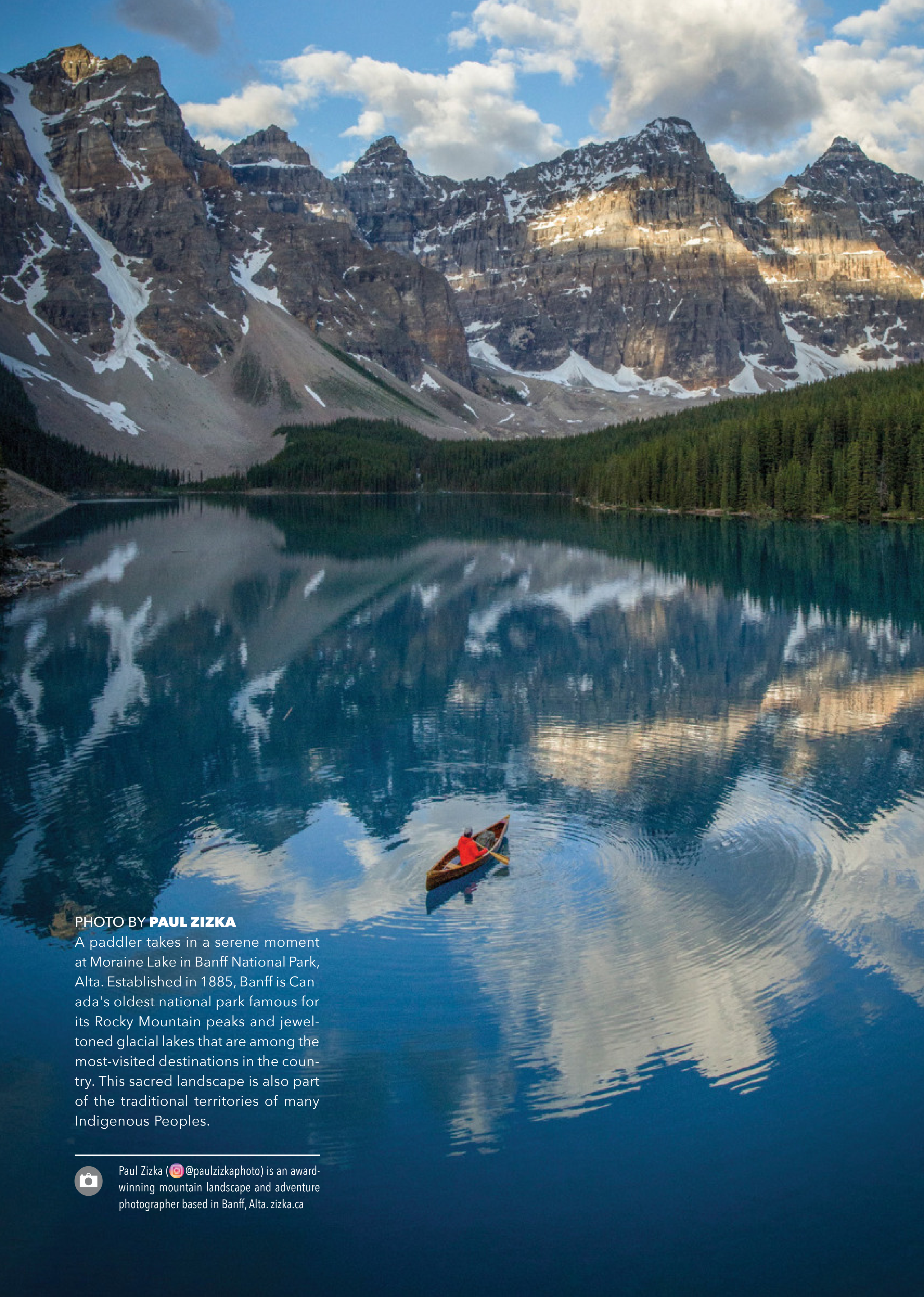


PHOTO BY **PAUL ZIZKA**

A paddler takes in a serene moment at Moraine Lake in Banff National Park, Alta. Established in 1885, Banff is Canada's oldest national park famous for its Rocky Mountain peaks and jewel-toned glacial lakes that are among the most-visited destinations in the country. This sacred landscape is also part of the traditional territories of many Indigenous Peoples.

Paul Zizka (@paulzizkaphoto) is an award-winning mountain landscape and adventure photographer based in Banff, Alta. zizka.ca

MANIFEST OPPORTUNITY

Learning about resistance from Indigenous Peoples

BY **NIIGAANWEWIDAM SINCLAIR** WITH ILLUSTRATION BY **MISHIIKENH KWE**

DURING HIS INAUGURATION speech on January 20, 2025, Donald Trump used a phrase that chilled the soul. "We will pursue our *manifest destiny* into the stars, launching American astronauts to plant the Stars and Stripes on the planet Mars." Trump may have been alluding to a future in outer space, but he's really talking about the past, right here, on this continent. "Manifest destiny" was coined by American writer John L. O'Sullivan in 1845, expressing the longstanding and racist belief that the U.S. is culturally, religiously and socially superior to all — a nation chosen by God to inherit the Earth. The primary result of that relentless expansionism was the displacement and genocide of Indigenous Peoples.

Under Trump — who also claimed he was "saved by God to make America great again" — this mission is back with a vengeance. Now, Canadians can experience a taste of Indigenous life with the president's threats to turn Canada into the 51st state — a clear violation of Canadian sovereignty, a sovereignty that relies on relationships with Indigenous Peoples via treaties, Indigenous rights and a complicated array of laws.

Canadians may want to ask Indigenous nations how manifest destiny takes place, feels — and what happens afterwards. Here's a hint: it's full of righteousness, very violent, painful and cruel. And it comes in cycles. This continent has endured waves of aggression against Indigenous Peoples and their territories, followed by a periodic break — with some tiny progress made — before another self-appointed "saviour" rises and the violence starts again.

In my lifetime, Pierre Trudeau's 1969 White Paper threatened to eliminate treaties and assimilate Indigenous communities. Then Brian Mulroney was forced into a sort of benevolence with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples after the failed Meech Lake accord and the Oka crisis. Jean Chrétien threatened to impose the stiffest controls in history, while Paul Martin promised to empower First Nations governments. Stephen Harper's reign saw some of the worst erasures of Indigenous rights in history, followed by Justin Trudeau, the most progressive prime minister Indigenous Peoples ever had.

Like the arrival and retreat of the seasons, the rise of some politician who stomps on the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples ain't nuthin' new. It's not these cycles of imperialism that are interesting about life here on Turtle Island — it's the forces that rise up, confront, engage and resist invasion.

In the '70s, opposition to Trudeau Sr.'s White Paper birthed Indigenous-led civil rights movements. In the '80s, fierce resistance in boardrooms and courtrooms by Indigenous visionaries resulted in the enshrinement of Indigenous rights in the Constitution. The '90s saw Elijah Harper's "no" to Meech Lake and the inspiring territorial resistances at Oka and elsewhere — culminating in a landmark commission examining Indigenous experiences in Canada. The 2000s witnessed brilliant and resilient residential school survivors demanding to be heard — leading to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

To counter resource development under Harper in the 2010s, Idle No More — the largest and most provocative Indigenous-led civil rights movement in modern Canadian history — saw activists take to malls, city streets and government buildings to resist using dance, song and ceremony.

It's fair to feel anxiety due to the haphazard, inconsistent and nonsensical approach of Trump: his threats, aggression and real-life harm. But a "saviour" like him is nothing new. He's after the same thing men like him have always wanted: money, power and fame. Kinda boring, really.

I'm more interested in the forces that confront invasion, resist and make history — how people from all walks of life can join together in remarkable, dynamic and inspiring ways. ❋

Niigaanwewidam Sinclair (🦋 @niigaanwewidam.bsky.social) is an Anishinaabe writer, editor and professor at the University of Manitoba. He is the Governor General award-winning author of Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre.

ON GUARD WITH THEE

A rapprochement between French Quebec and English Canada

BY **FRANCINE PELLETIER** WITH ILLUSTRATION BY **TALLULAH FONTAINE**

QC
oui
TRUMP
NOT FOR SALE

THERE HAS BEEN AT LEAST one bright spot amid Donald Trump's mean-spirited manoeuvres: the rise of an unabashed Canadian nationalism, no longer shy of raising its flag or even its fist. "Elbows up, Canada!" is now standard fare at every anti-Trump demonstration north of the 49th parallel.

Never one to back down from a fight, Quebec has joined Canada's active resistance to Trump's tariffs and threats of annexation. The fear and uncertainty that has gripped Canadians around job losses, inflation and market volatility caused by the despotic U.S. administration — not to mention its attacks on democratic institutions, free speech, higher education and due process — are equally felt by Quebecers.

This unprecedented crisis is bringing French Quebec and English Canada, the perennial odd couple, closer together. Not only do we share a common foe in Donald Trump; we share, for the first time in our 266-year history, fear for our survival. English Canada now understands what it means to be apprehensive about one's own existence — which is precisely what drives nationalism, for better or for worse. Nationalism is built not only on pride but on the fear of losing one's identity. Now, both sides, English and French, alongside First Nations, Métis and Inuit, are obliged to confront these existential woes.

Quebec's cultural frailty within North America — being "a cube of sugar beside a gallon of coffee" as novelist Yves Beauchemin once lamented — is a major vulnerability. Canada's Achilles heel is very different: it's too much like the rest of America. While this indistinctiveness was the basis of an unusually close relationship between Canada and the United States, the time has come to stand up and be counted. Canada, which can no longer assume the U.S. has its back, needs to draw a sharper line between itself and its unruly neighbour. And no one understands this more than Quebec.

The fact that Canada is asserting its independence while Quebec's own sovereignty movement is in decline also facilitates an English-French *rapprochement*. Had sovereignty been a popular option when Canada-U.S. relations imploded, it might have given the Parti Québécois the opportunity to hold a long-promised third referendum. But sovereignty has lost steam over the years, particularly among the younger generations. According to a recent poll, only a third of 18- to 34-year-olds are in favour of sovereignty. If Quebec's youth no longer dream of "mon pays" then there is little hope of reviving that dream in the foreseeable future.

What happened? The socio-political context today is vastly different than the one that spurred the sovereignty movement 50 years ago. At the beginning of the Quiet Revolution, in the early '60s, Quebec was home to a poor, barely literate French-speaking population, cowed by the Catholic Church and dominated by an Anglo-American business class. There was much to change and rally against, and indeed, within a couple of decades, Quebec had transformed itself into a very different place: a progressive, secular and mostly middle-class society in charge of its own laws, businesses and culture. The sovereignty movement's problem today is that it has no real enemy to rage against, no fiery dragon to slay.

And then, there is everything else. The utopian dreams of the '60s and '70s have given way to dystopian nightmares. The planet is dying, American autocracy is at our door, and the world built in the wake of the Second World War to guarantee justice, freedom and equality for all is crumbling. What else can we do but stand up and hold on tight to our better angels? This fight is bigger than any one nation or goal. The world is being reprogrammed, and we need to throw our hats into the ring. I think most Quebecers understand this. This is a fight that we can only wage together. ❄

Francine Pelletier is a professor of journalism at Concordia University, a writer and documentary filmmaker. Her book, The Rise and Fall of Québec Nationalism, *will be published in English this summer.*

TRUE, STRONG AND FREE

On the freedom of being trans and Canadian

BY **MEL WOODS** WITH ILLUSTRATION BY **CHI NWOSU**

I AM CANADIAN, not thanks to any particular choice on my part. In June 1995, I was born in a hospital in Kelowna, B.C., to parents who happened to be Canadian. My birth certificate and passport have a maple leaf on them in the same way they have my name and gender marker — decisions made by borders and cherry-picked aspects of biology.

As a trans and non-binary person, I've been thinking about this a lot lately, as Canadians reckon with threats to our sovereignty posed by U.S. president Donald Trump — and as transgender rights face threats from bad actors here and globally. I've watched my community of cisgender neighbours loudly and proudly double down on their Canadianness in recent months — and it's not dissimilar from how trans people affirm our identities every day.

When it comes to gender or being Canadian, it's not about the borders we were born within or our birth-certificate markers. It's about what we do and how we live our lives. This embrace of self-determinism is what makes being trans — and being Canadian — so remarkable. In their seminal 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler argues gender is performative in that it only exists so long as we say it does. Gender is, Butler argues, an act of *doing* rather than being. Being Canadian isn't all that different: it's about the *doing*, rather than an act of being. A trans person might bind their chest, march in a Pride parade, wear high heels or grow a beard to perform gender. How different is that from wearing a Sidney Crosby Team Canada jersey to perform patriotism?

We call ourselves Canadian. We sing our national anthem. We buy local at the grocery store. We cheer for the Blue Jays (begrudgingly). We say "sorry," drink Tim Hortons and believe the Rocky Mountains are one of the most beautiful places on Earth. We embrace being nice — both at surface level and as a core value. We welcome our neighbours. We champion socialized health care, where getting sick doesn't mean going bankrupt. We celebrate our country's peacemaking abroad, and we relish in slapping a Canada flag on our backpacks and getting a warm reception almost everywhere we go. In doing all that, we are performing Canadianness.

This extends beyond those of us born here. What is the process of applying for citizenship if not performance? You must prove your commitment to being Canadian through time, a test and a pledge to the monarch. If you choose to be here and perform Canadianness, you get to be Canadian. We are Canadian because we say we are. And, just like with gender, we choose the parts of that we embrace and perform. Many trans people identify strongly with aspects of binary gender even while acknowledging its problems and limitations. Many Canadians rightfully acknowledge the anti-Indigenous sentiment at the root of identifying so strongly with a colonial state.

There is a movement within conservatism that aims to separate queer and trans people from freedom of expression. On the first day of his second presidency, Trump declared a "common sense revolution" that excludes everyone outside his two "biological genders." Politicians like Trump seek to restrict our freedom to exist — prompting many to reportedly flee here — in the same way his threats to Canadian sovereignty seek to do the same to being Canadian.

But ultimately, they can't take away who we are. When it comes to my gender, I've found my way to a different place than what was decided in that Kelowna hospital 30 years ago. But when it comes to being Canadian, I've come to embrace all that it can be.

People move here because they want to be Canadian. Trans people transition because we want to exist as something else. We are boundless possibilities and self-determination. We are true, we are strong and, most of all, we are free.

Mel Woods (🦋 @melwoods.me) is an award-winning journalist, writer and digital producer based in Vancouver and the senior editor for audience engagement at Xtra Magazine.

Nihal Elwan, founder and CEO of Tayybeh, enjoys Volunteer Park in Vancouver.

THE CANADIAN DREAM

NEWCOMERS ARE SOLD A VISION OF A NEW LIFE IN CANADA THAT DOESN'T ALWAYS COME TRUE. SUPPORT NETWORKS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

BY **KAMAL AL-SOLAYLEE**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIEL NELMS**

NIHAL ELWAN was the first to admit that she didn't have "an entrepreneurial bone" in her body. The Egyptian-born, British-educated anthropologist, who moved to Canada in 2014 after a career in international development, even tells me she was not much of a foodie. Well, this is confusing. We're sitting in Tayybeh, a popular restaurant and catering company in Vancouver that Elwan has owned and operated since 2017. It showcases Syrian food made by women refugees from the Middle East and has quickly become a go-to place for Arabic cuisine and community spirit in the city's bougie westside.

Career shifts are common for newcomers to Canada, but Elwan's pivot was shaped not by the particulars of her own journey but by those of more than 3,600 Syrians, primarily refugees, fleeing a brutal war and arriving in British Columbia between 2015 and 2016. She kept thinking, "What are these people going to do here? They're really from very different cultural backgrounds" to B.C. and Canada. She ultimately landed on food as a bridge between the world they left behind and the one they had just entered.

Kamal Al-Solaylee is the director of the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at UBC and the author of three nonfiction books. Mariel Nelms is a B.C.-based commercial and editorial photographer.

Lenya Wilks also knows a thing or two about career reinvention en route to a new homeland. The Jamaica native moved to Brandon, Man., to study jazz vocals in 2016, finding her creative bliss in neo-soul, a blend of jazz and soul. Think Ella Fitzgerald meets Whitney Houston meets Anita Baker, she tells me when we meet at the office of DIVERSEcity, the immigration settlement service in Surrey, B.C. As director of partnerships and stakeholder engagement, Wilks focuses on community engagement and capacity building for diversity and inclusion work among the grassroots organizations that fall within her ever-expanding portfolio. (She also oversees child and family services and some youth programming.)

"I haven't performed in a long time. I've really paused music," she says with a discernable note of regret. "This sector is not a nine to five. You take home a lot of work."

From two different vantage points, Elwan and Wilks have witnessed and reshaped the Canadian immigration story — as immigrants themselves and as supporters of newcomers. Their experiences reveal what immigration and refugee settlement in Canada looks like in the 21st century. For much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, immigration to Canada was about colonizing the continent with (mostly) people of European descent. Policy shifts in the 1960s favoured skills and education and eliminated racial preference in ways that enshrined the economic benefits of immigration as a source of GDP growth, a solution to labour shortages and a pipeline to Canada's emerging multicultural national identity. The economic case for immigration is clear, but so are the cracks in the system. Now, in this mixed narrative, women take the lead supporting other women, and newcomers of different generations and backgrounds fill in gaps in government cutbacks or policy flip-flopping on the number of immigrants admitted to Canada.

Palestinian Kufiya
$ 45
Made in Nablus
Palestine
Laurice Khoury Foundation

A variety of Middle Eastern dishes prepared at Tayybeh (ABOVE). The restaurant also sells Palestinian kufiya (LEFT) to support the Laurice Khoury Foundation.

Migrants to this country have built networks of support to help weather changing attitudes to immigration. In 2024, 58 per cent of Canadians believed the country accepts too many immigrants, up 14 per cent from the previous year, which saw a jump of 17 per cent from the one before (2022). Although the majority of Canadians (68 per cent) still view immigration as a net positive to the economy, some commentators and settlement workers, including Wilks, believe the system is at a breaking point, being kept together by the goodwill and sacrifices of other immigrants who are farther along their journey into Canada.

IN 2014, Elwan moved to Vancouver to join her Canadian husband, who had landed a tenure-track position at Simon Fraser University. It was love at first sight. "I remember thinking, 'this city is gorgeous.' It was August. It was warm, the weather was glorious, the beaches were beautiful," she says as staff flit around us serving the busy lunch-hour crowd. She was nursing her one-year-old child when Syrian refugees began arriving in Canada. Tayybeh's origin story took shape soon after.

"My idea was, 'Let's just get some money, get some Syrian women to cook for people in my building' — really very, very basic," Elwan recalls. The basic became intricate after a successful grant application for $500 led to a pop-up buffet-style dinner for 60 at a restaurant and then for 120 at a church.

That first pop-up dinner started with four women. Syrian women kept recommending friends, neighbours and relatives, most of whom had never worked before or cooked for anyone but their families.

"Everything that we take for granted about employment is something we had to introduce, repeat and enforce," Elwan recalls. That means everything from the importance of punctuality to the value of paying taxes. As the business grew, so did the relationships and the community around Tayybeh — and around Elwan, who says the bonds between her and the other women go beyond the employer-employee relationship.

Maha Al Ahmad, 44, has been working as a chef at Tayybeh for five years. The restaurant has anchored her and her family in Canada. "I'm always learning and accomplishing new things," she tells me in Arabic.

The mother of five can't see herself living anywhere else. When pressed to explain what Canada gave her, the expression she repeated most was "feeling safe." She recalls a trip to

Elena Akfaly (right), Tayybeh's kitchen manager, works alongside Sara Elelimy, the restaurant's operations assistant.

Germany last year that made her jittery the moment she landed at the airport. "Racism is rife there. You start in a conversation in English, and they don't respond in English, even if they know the language. We have not experienced this in Canada."

Elena Akfaly, Tayybeh's kitchen manager, is about a decade younger than Al Ahmad. She arrived in Canada as a refugee in 2019 and lived in Edmonton for two years before moving to Vancouver in 2022, drawn to Canada's West Coast by her love of the open sea. To Akfaly, Canada is "*chway chway*" — bit by bit — becoming home. "When someone asks me, I say I'm Syrian Canadian."

TUCKED INTO A LOW-RISE between a vape shop that sells vape refills and bongs and a hair salon and spa where, as if time stood still, you can get a regular haircut for $10, DIVERSEcity's bland exterior belies a colourful history. For almost five decades, the organization has been providing Surrey's immigrant and refugee communities with a range of settlement services to help them navigate local resources for, among other things, housing, health, schooling, language training and employment. As Wilks shows me around the building to greet front-line workers, I notice that all but one of the dozen people I meet are women — and almost all are, themselves, relatively new immigrants to Canada.

The immigration and settlement sector is "predominantly led by women, mothers, sisters, aunts — and they do [this] because it's a part of our nature," Wilks tells me. The work remains under-compensated, as is often the case for the non-profit sector and for industries where women dominate, such as health care and domestic service.

I ask Wilks about the significance of having immigrants with varied Canadian work experience helping newcomers at a raw and often stressful point in their Canadian journey. Part of me is wondering about the immigrant's lot to perform emotional labour in addition to physical. Wilks prefers to lean in on other aspects of the relationship among different generations of immigrants and refugees.

"Understanding is very important, because if you don't understand the [immigration] journey, then you won't understand the struggles, and you won't be able to provide them with the support they need and the advice they will need," Wilks explains. "It doesn't mean that an individual who's not an immigrant can't do this work. It just means that shared understanding

OPPOSITE, **clockwise from BOTTOM:** Photos of friends and family are displayed at Tayybeh; tea is served with lunch; Elwan and Akfaly share a meal. THIS PAGE: Lenya Wilks works at DIVERSEcity, which helps immigrants and refugees to settle in Canada.

allows you to lead with a little bit more compassion and patience."

Many of the clients in DIVERSEcity (but men in particular) are caught in the classic employment trap of this country. You need Canadian work experience to get a good job, and you can't get a good job without Canadian work experience. The disconnect has led to frustration, disillusionment and what experts refer to as onward migration. A 2024 study by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and the Conference Board of Canada suggests that highly skilled immigrants — the ones Canada deems essential to its economic growth — are leaving in record numbers, with a third of the immigrants who leave doing so within five years of arriving in the country.

"We sell them a dream," Wilks says, referring to the federal government and to immigrant consultants. Immigrants "were sold a dream that they can come to Canada, and they will find meaningful employment. Nobody tells them the truth: you're going to pay thousands of dollars to be retrained or to get your credentials recognized. It may take you two to three years to even get into the field that you're coming from."

Wilks believes many parties have unfairly profited off packaging and selling that dream: immigration consultants, universities that have made settling in Canada after studying a recruitment tool, and governments that use immigration targets as a political and economic lever. When a friend or family member asks Wilks about immigrating to Canada, her response is a simple: "Not right now."

MY CONVERSATIONS with Elwan and Wilks took place three weeks before the federal elections, which were overtaken by the trade war with the United States and soul-searching into Canada's sovereignty.

Concerns about the current political climate and a rising anti-Arab sentiment motivated Elwan to apply for her Canadian citizenship, something she had put aside to focus on Tayybeh. "I'm really anchored in this place," she says as she points both to her restaurant and to the city outside it. "I felt that this was the right moment for me to apply, and I feel very happy and excited to be a citizen."

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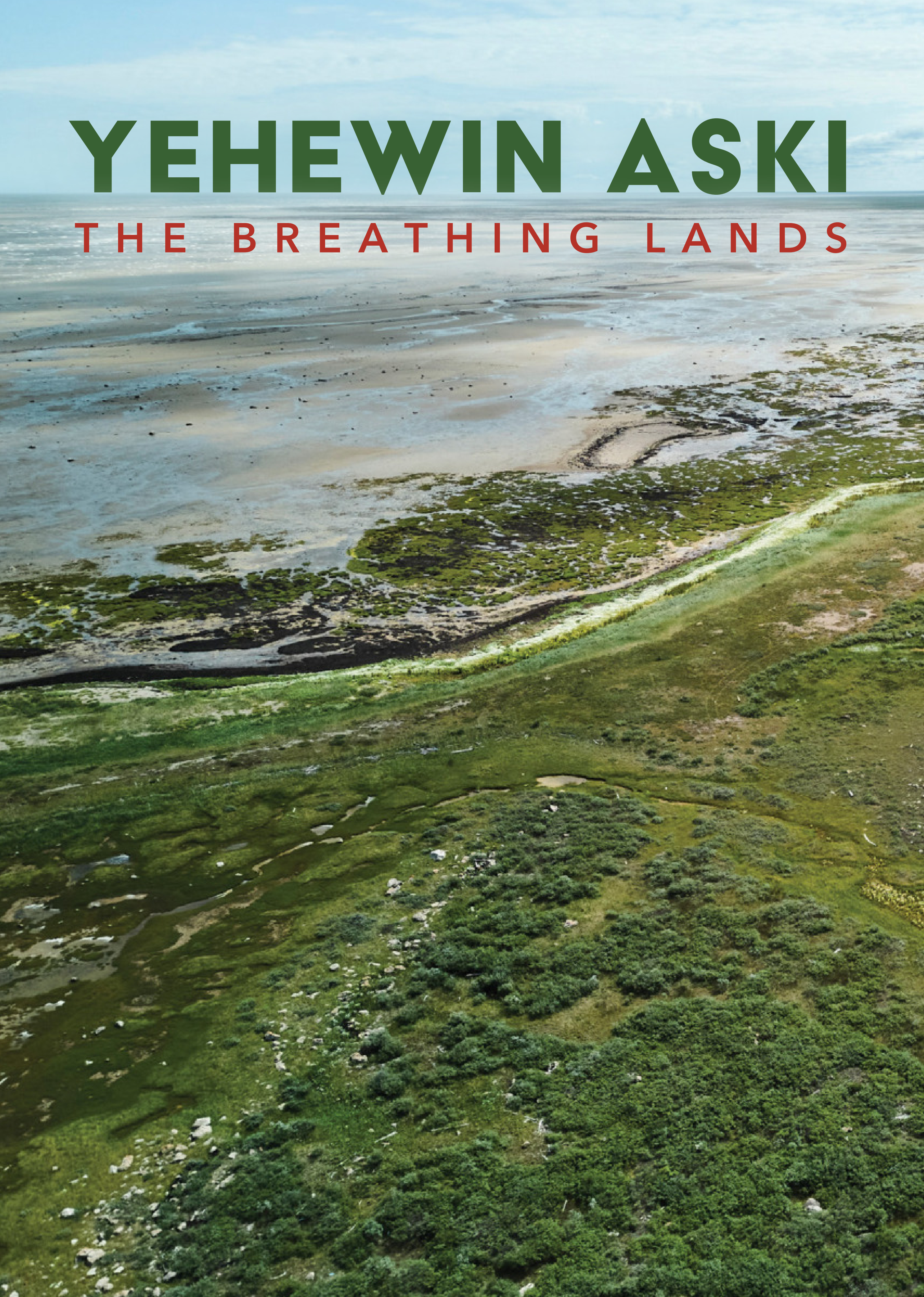
YEHEWIN ASKI

THE BREATHING LANDS



ON THE WESTERN SHORES OF JAMES AND HUDSON BAYS, A GROUP OF OMUSHKEGO CREE NATIONS HAVE BEEN WORKING TO PROTECT BOTH WATER AND LAND

BY **SUSAN NERBERG**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRISTIAN FLEURY**

YOU CAN'T BLAME Sam Hunter for not being in the mood for a boat ride. Rain is pelting the hamlet of Peawanuck, and the northeasterly wind coming in from Hudson Bay sweeps the coastal lowlands of northern Ontario. "I don't like this weather," Hunter says from underneath a furrowed brow, even as he and his German shepherd puppy, Niska, make their way by ATV from his house to the boat launch on the Winisk River. There's no one there to brag about how good the fishing had been upstream, no one to lament how the thawing permafrost downstream is tearing apart the riverbank, leaving the bank swallows to search for new homes. And there is no one around to debate the merits of a proposal to formally protect the tawich, the coastal area with its tidal marshes, mudflats and rivers, and the sea beyond, to which Hunter and others from Weenusk First Nation are inextricably linked. There is only the voice of the river. A dozen freighter canoes lie idle on the rocky bank, their owners no doubt thinking the same as Hunter. "I don't like this weather," he repeats, "but maybe it'll get better by the time we reach the coast."

Hunter is Omushkego Cree. He was born on the tawich and still lives off and for it. It's his ancestors' land as much as it belongs to his grandchildren, and it's always been like that. But Hunter, Weenusk First Nation's natural resources monitor, worries about the future.

He's seen first-hand the changes wrought by permafrost thaw, forest fires and a stunted sea ice season, driven by climate warming and endangering the animals and plants that underpin Omushkego culture. So, when the Mushkegowuk Council — the organization that represents seven Omushkego nations — and the federal government rolled out a plan to create a Cree-led marine preserved area along western Weeneebeg, or James Bay, and southwestern Washaybeyoh, or Hudson Bay, Hunter saw it as a step toward safeguarding the land for his grandchildren. While his community and Fort Severn First Nation to the northwest aren't members of the Mushkegowuk Council, they've signed on to become part of the proposed Mushkegowuk national marine conservation area. Stretching nearly 1,300 kilometres along Ontario's northern coast — from the Manitoba border to Quebec — the offshore area and shoreline holds one of the most biodiverse and pristine ecosystems on the planet, supporting beluga whales, polar bears, walruses, caribou and millions of shorebirds, ducks and geese that nest or stop over during their migration.

While the conservation area aims, at least in its first phase, to protect the offshore marine area, the tawich is both water and land. Omushkego don't compartmentalize geography the way western society tends to do, seeing the land — the terrestrial and the aquatic — in a holistic way. For Hunter and other community members in the region, going

out on the tawich can mean net fishing on the mudflats, berry picking on a bog, goose hunting on an island, trout fishing on a river or travelling on the bay. The land here is a patchwork of bogs, fens and wetlands, stitched together by peat and animal paths: moose and caribou on firmer ground, birds on the fluid border between land and sea. Above it all hangs a web of flyways, a loose gauze carrying winged migrations. The Omushkego refer to this vast wetland area as Yehewin Aski — the Breathing Lands. They've understood its significance since time immemorial.

That's why an Omushkego-led national marine conservation area is so vital — and not only for the land-based culture; the formalization of Cree stewardship would also mean a greater chance for Canada and the world to reach biodiversity goals as set out in the United Nations-led Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Hunter has already been engaged for years in the preservation of the tawich, working both for his First Nation and with research scientists to monitor and record biodiversity, water quality, weather and landscape changes. But the official approvals process for the Mushkegowuk national marine conservation area got underway in 2024 — all communities in the area must vote in favour of implementing the marine conservation area for it to become reality. One of the reasons Hunter needs to go to his coastal cabin on such a dreary day is to get ready to host a team from the National Audubon Society and the Toronto-based conservation group Wildlands League; there's some tidying up to do after a black bear rummaged through it for food the previous week. So, despite the weather, Hunter pushes his boat into the current. Zigzagging downriver to avoid propeller-shattering shallows, he looks stressed as he glances up at slate clouds colliding with black spruce. But the closer he gets to the sea, the smoother his facial expression becomes; by the end of the two-hour boat ride, he almost looks content. "I still don't like this wind," he says as he ties the boat to driftwood. "But I think we're in for a couple of nice days."

> "We have a RESPONSIBILITY to speak up for the animals."

The wind foils Hunter's plan to fish. (The traditional Omushkego way is to drive stakes with a net into the mudflat at low tide and pluck fish from it at the next low tide.) While cooking caribou and mashed potatoes on the woodstove, he says willows have crept closer to the coast over the past 40 years. The land here used to be tundra-like, save for a few knee-high shrubs. Those shrubs have grown to become trees. "The Elders say this kind of growth has not been seen in over a thousand years," Hunter says. The permafrost is thawing, and the ground, once frozen firm, is now soft or even swampy, allowing

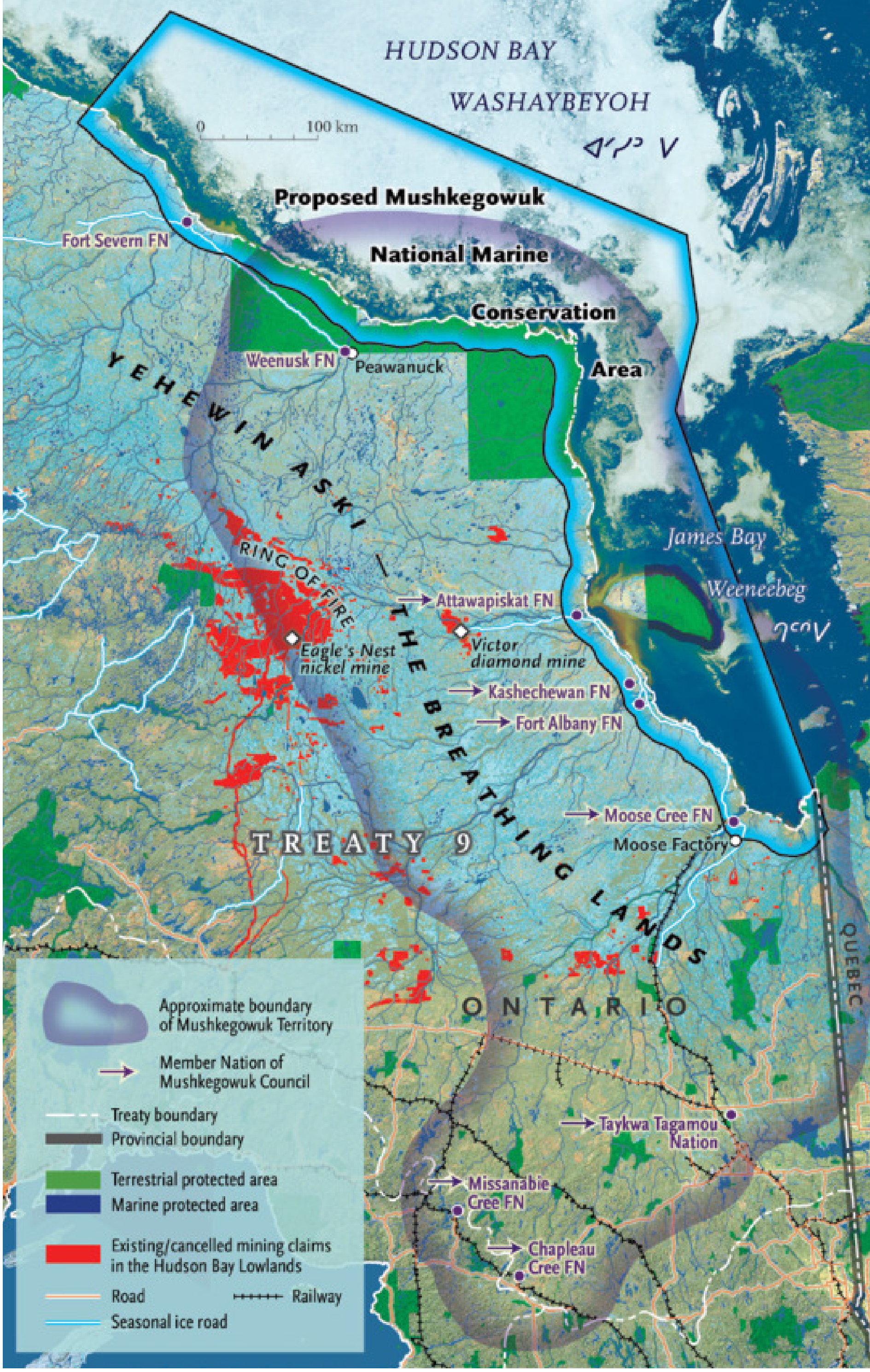
Sam Hunter (LEFT), travelling up the Winisk River. For 40 years, Hunter has observed accelerating permafrost thaw, creating swampy areas (BOTTOM).

MAP: CHRIS BRACKLEY/CAN GEO. DATA: NMCA AND MUSHKEGOWUK TERRITORY: MUSHKEGOWUK FIRST NATIONS MAP, MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL, 2023; MINING CLAIMS: OPERATIONAL CELL CLAIMS, ONTARIO GEOLOGICAL SURVEY. © QUEEN'S PRINTER FOR ONTARIO. MARCH 2022; PROTECTED AREAS: CANADIAN PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS DATABASE 2023, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA; LAND COVER: 2015 LAND COVER. © ESA CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE - LAND COVER PROJECT 2017; SEA ICE: CORRECTED REFLECTANCE (TERRA/ /MODIS) 250M, NASA WORLDVIEW

plants to move in and take root and willows to shoot skyward. "It's less safe now because bears come right up to the cabin before you know it."

The following morning, Niska starts barking at 7:30. The sun is up, but Hunter is not. He stayed up late stoking the fire, trying to stave off the chill from the north wind, which makes early August feel like late October. It roars as it rounds the cabin, but the dog is louder. "Shit!" groans Hunter and catapults out of bed. After a scramble to find his glasses, he reaches for his shotgun and opens the door. "Stay inside! And if I say so, get up on the roof," he orders, pointing to a hatch in the ceiling. He closes the door behind him. A shot rings out. Terrified, Niska keeps barking. Another shot. A mere 30 metres from the cabin, wapusk, the white bear, turns around toward the sea.

Nerves calmed, breakfast out of the way, Hunter goes for a ride on his eight-wheel Argo, an ATV that can caterpillar its way over rocks and through mud holes and rivers. The morning visitor is nowhere in sight. Still, Hunter stops frequently to scan the horizon. An estimated 900 to 1,000 polar bears roam southern Hudson Bay while they're waiting for the sea ice to form so they can hunt seals again. It's a wait that's getting longer each year. So in the ice-free summer, polar bears sniff out mussels on the mudflats. "And over the past 20 years, I've seen them adapt to eating moulting geese and ducks," Hunter says, adding that without their flight feathers, fowl are easy prey. But most often, wapusk prefers to lay low to conserve energy.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Proposed Mushkegowuk National Marine Conservation Area
Fort Severn FN
Weenusk FN
Peawanuck
YEHEWIN ASKI — THE BREATHING LANDS
RING OF FIRE
Attawapiskat FN
Eagle's Nest nickel mine
Victor diamond mine
Kashechewan FN
Fort Albany FN
James Bay
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TREATY 9
Moose Cree FN
Moose Factory
ONTARIO
QUEBEC
Taykwa Tagamou Nation
Missanabie Cree FN
Chapleau Cree FN
Approximate boundary of Mushkegowuk Territory
Member Nation of Mushkegowuk Council
Treaty boundary
Provincial boundary
Terrestrial protected area
Marine protected area
Existing/cancelled mining claims in the Hudson Bay Lowlands
Road
Railway
Seasonal ice road

Hunter stops the Argo; he's spotted something in the distance. Boulders? He aims his binoculars: two massive bears slumbering on a bed of seaweed. "When I'm gone," he says, "I want people still to be able to see polar bears, and belugas and birds." The marine conservation area would let sleeping bears sleep, safe from industry. It could also help the Breathing Lands breathe free.

YEHEWIN ASKI — or the Hudson Bay Lowland, as scientists call it — is the second-largest carbon store on the planet, even larger than the Amazon rainforest. Holding between 30 billion and 40 billion tonnes of carbon in the peat and permafrost, the lowland plays an enormous role globally in mitigating climate change — as long as it's kept intact. Around the time Hunter is scaring off polar bears, Lorna Harris, Adam Kirkwood and Haley MacLeod of Wildlife Conservation Society Canada are busy in-stalling permafrost monitoring equipment to track ground temperatures around Peawanuck at sites chosen with input from Hunter. As the team heads out on one of the bogs, they can barely walk straight across the quaking carpet underfoot.

Harris and Kirkwood have been tracking peatland dynamics in the region for years, while MacLeod, an aquatic ecologist and toxicologist, is here for the first time, interested in monitoring whether thawing permafrost leaches methyl mercury into rivers. While the three support the creation of a national marine conservation area, they stress that to do so properly, it's also necessary to protect the watersheds that flow into the Hudson and James bays. "Bogs hold rainwater. Any excess can drain into fens, which in turn can release water into rivers," explains Kirkwood as he pulls a chunk of frozen peat from an auger. Harris puts it more bluntly. "If you don't protect the watershed, if you don't protect the peatlands, you are not protecting the bay."

The land here is at once terrestrial and aquatic. For the animals to thrive, "keep the land the way it is," says Margaret Mack as she stops by Peawanuck's boat launch on the Winisk River. The community's nurse, Mack grew up on the tawich and has a camp not far from Hunter's on Washaybeyoh. She's eager to retire so she can spend more time on the land, teaching youth how to pluck geese, gut fish and snare hares. For Mack, long-term wealth means keeping the tawich natural. She points to promises of jobs made by the Victor diamond mine south of here, which she says ended up being short term before the mine closed completely in 2019. "I worry about what's going to come floating down the rivers if mining starts in the Ring of Fire," she says, turning her eyes onto the Winisk, into the wind, which keeps pushing her long hair across her face.

Mack's worry is shared by Lawrence Martin and Ernest Beck. Nearly 800 kilometres south of Peawanuck, in one of the Mushkegowuk Council's

Clockwise from ABOVE: Margaret Mack, Peawanuck's nurse; Haley MacLeod and Adam Kirkwood of the Wildlife Conservation Society; the proposed NMCA is home to some 1,000 polar bears; the Hudson Bay Lowland is the world's second-largest carbon store.

offices in Timmins, the two have just wrapped a staff meeting. Off to one side, a map outlining Treaty 9 codifies the dream of a Mushkegowuk national marine conservation area. Martin, the director of the council's lands and resources department, traces a finger inland from James Bay to a roughly 5,000-square-kilometre area known as the Ring of Fire. He then taps on a sheet showing more than 30,000 mining claims in the Ring of Fire alone. "This is what we're up against," he says, then pulls out a copy of the Omushkego Wahkohtowin conservation plan (wahkohtowin roughly translates to "kinship with the land"). "Our goal is to protect all of our treaty lands from forestry, mining and hydroelectric projects that may cause harm to Cree culture," he says. "Protecting the marine area through an NMCA is the first step — the tool that'll allow us to bring land protection to the table."

The Mushkegowuk Council has sought funding and support to protect their land since the '80s. But it wasn't until the federal government's 2019 announcement that it would work to protect 25 per cent of Canada's land and oceans by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030, that they saw action. Beck and a group of council members got busy writing letters to drum up political and financial support for a marine protected area. In 2020, they approached Parks Canada, whose objective is to create at least one national marine conservation area in each of Canada's 29 distinct marine regions, including James Bay and Hudson Bay. And in 2021, the council signed a memorandum of understanding with Parks to carry out a three-year feasibility study to gather the evidence to recommend Weeneebeg and Washaybeyoh for a designation — an inventory of what makes the tawich special, explains Martin.

> "If you don't protect the watershed, if you don't protect the peatlands, you are not protecting THE BAY."

Together with Parks Canada, the council recorded the biomes, species and habitats along the coast and offshore and collected knowledge from Elders and land users to map the area's inherent values. At a gathering in Kashechewan, near James Bay, in February 2024, they announced the results: the study area did indeed warrant protection, and the recommendation to create the Mushkegowuk national marine conservation area became offical. While the proposal announced that day was for the offshore area (86,000 square kilometres up to the low-watermark, representing 1.5 per cent of Canada's oceans), discussions have already begun around a possible phase 2: the expansion of protection up to

Susan Nerberg is a Sámi writer and editor based in Montreal. Christian Fleury is a documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Montreal.

20 kilometres inland — should Ontario and Nunavut (which has jurisdiction over the bay's islands) agree.

The national marine conservation area forms part of the larger Treaty 9 protection objective in the Wakohtowin conservation plan. As Beck puts it, "sea and land are connected; they're one." And if anyone needs proof of a tangible link between the terrestrial and the aquatic, consider the polar bear. Ontario is one of the only places in the world where female polar bears, after heading into the lowlands from the bay, dig a hole in the peat to give birth. Sam Hunter, for one, has seen mother bears and cubs as far as 160 kilometres inland from his nearshore camp — emphasizing the need for Indigenous knowledge, participation and leadership in conservation. It also underscores why the Omushkego Cree want the land protected from industrial development: if you disturb the peatlands, you undermine both the habitat of species important to Cree culture and the future of the Hudson Bay Lowland as a climate buffer for the entire planet.

> "I want people still to be able to **SEE** polar bears, and belugas and birds."

Yet the national marine conservation area proposal is not without opposition. For starters, "Ontario wants mining, not conservation," says Martin about the provincial government's eagerness to open the Ring of Fire to critical-minerals extraction. It's been challenging to get the province to hear the council's arguments for expanding the marine protected area inland. Locally, there's mistrust of what is essentially a government scheme. (A national marine conservation area is initiated by the government, unlike an Indigenous protected and conserved area, which has weaker legal protections.)

Initially, people worried their inherent, treaty and constitutionally protected rights to hunt, fish and trap on traditional territories might be diluted under a government project that endorses conservation. It's a valid concern, considering Canada's history of having excluded Indigenous Peoples from or limiting their access to traditional lands for the sake of creating parks. "But the whole idea with this NMCA is to strengthen Omushkego control of our lands and waters, and that includes upholding our inherent and treaty rights," says Martin. Beck adds that the national marine conservation area "will be Cree led, with Parks Canada in a supporting role." Despite skepticism, there's cautious optimism all nine communities will eventually vote in favour of the proposal. And if things turn out the way Martin and Beck hope, the conservation area should give the Omushkego Cree the sovereignty they need to shape their current and future kinship with the tawich.

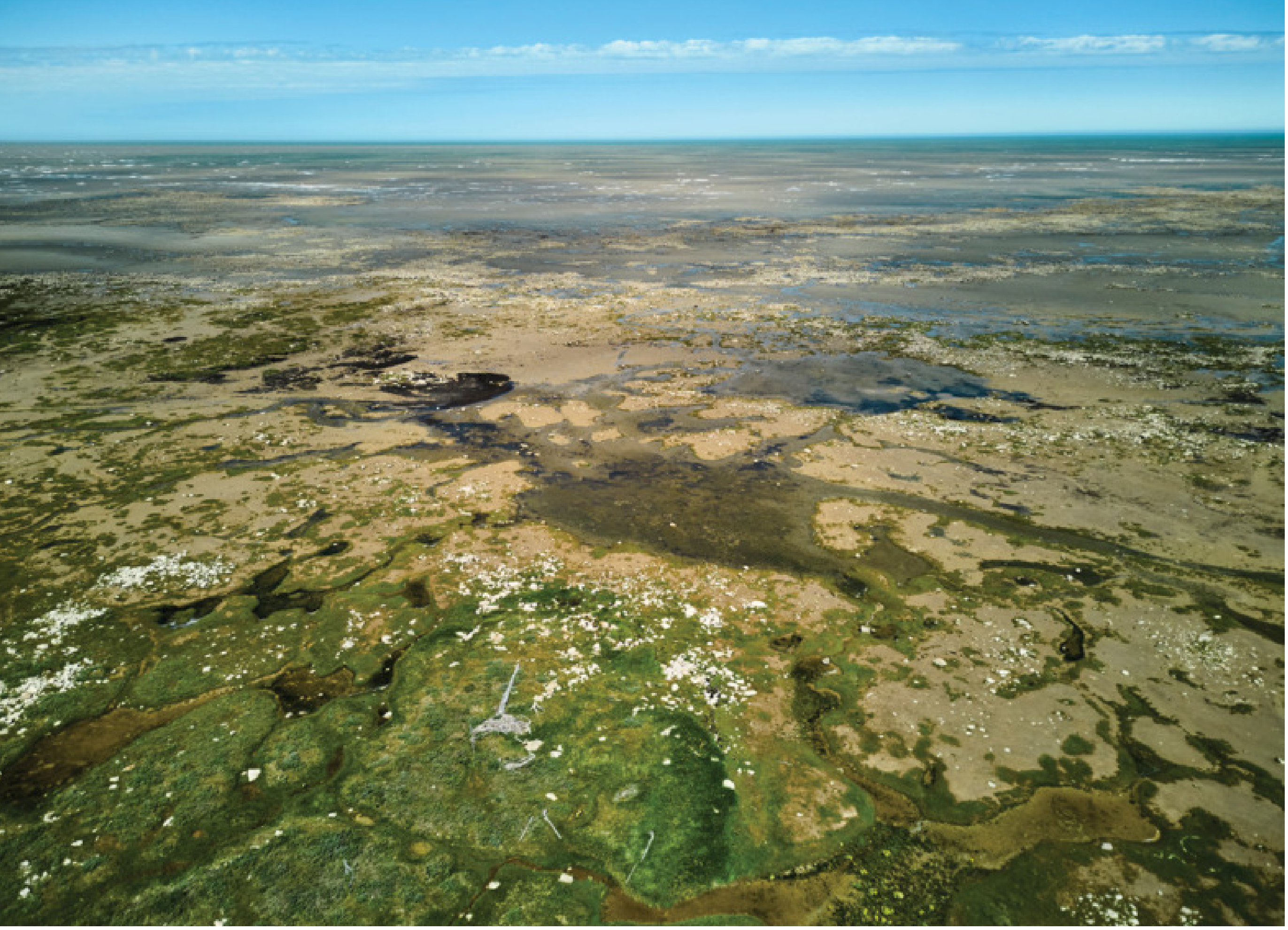
HUDSON BAY isn't the only part of the tawich where polar bears roam. They're also at home on James Bay, even if there aren't as many as farther north. About 300 kilometres

Male polar bears (OPPOSITE LEFT) nuzzle on the coastline; James Kataquapit (OPPOSITE RIGHT), an Attawapiskat First Nation council member; the NCMA would protect nesting sites for birds such as sandhill cranes (ABOVE) and short-billed dowitchers (BELOW).

southeast of Hunter's cabin, Jeronimo Kataquapit grabs his shotgun and starts walking along the shore from his family's campsite on one of the Twin Islands. Waves, pushing up on the cobbles, make the Hudsonian godwits and lesser yellowlegs seem part of the surf, sprinting up and down the beach with each wave as if they were the tasselled edge of the sea. Crossing toward the opposite side of the small island, Kataquapit soon finds himself wading through a sea of his own, one in which the waves washing over his feet come in white, purple, yellow and pink. In the distance, the swaying flowers swaddle flocks of sandhill cranes doing their best to outperform the wind. Kataquapit seems at ease here — despite sussing out if a white spot in the distance might be a polar bear.

By the time Kataquapit strolls back into camp, his father, James Kataquapit, has finished making frybread, a killer version with raisins that no one — not even Jeronimo's mother, Monique Edwards — has been able to replicate. James, his hair tied with an elastic beneath a camo ball cap, grabs a couple of frybreads and a thermo mug of tea, then sits down to stoke the fire he's just lit. Jeronimo sits down beside him. They chat about not starting up the internet, because that would use up fuel needed for the boat ride back to Attawapiskat, and about Monique not coming out on this tawich getaway because she was busy doing the final planning for the opening of the community's highly anticipated youth centre.

Father and son didn't initially see the benefits of a marine conservation area when the idea first came to their community of 1,500 people. Misinformation had spread that it would erode Indigenous inherent and treaty rights, which James feels stemmed from insufficient communication. "Elders and bush people like me don't use technology," he says about the mostly online up-dates coming from the Mushkegowuk Council. But Jeronimo is plugged in. When he realized the potential for preserving Cree traditions — knowledge he is still learning by spending time on the tawich with his parents — he set out to convince his mom and dad. As far back as he can remember, his parents have always been on the land, providing for their family and passing on knowledge they inherited from their parents and grandparents. With the recurring threats from outside to strangle rivers in hydro dams, clog the bay with wind turbines and desecrate the peatlands for minerals, Jeronimo feared for the future possibility to practise Cree culture. Those concerns helped him turn his parents into proponents of the marine conservation area.



The Mushkegowuk Council hopes the proposed protected area will lead to broader protection of land (LEFT). James and Jeronimo Kataquapit (RIGHT) discuss hunting on James Bay.

"The NMCA is important for protecting the sea, but it's also a way to encourage protection of the land and the rivers," James says, rubbing his hands in the fire's heat. "We don't see those areas as separate."

While James adds wood to the fire, Jeronimo goes to fetch a piece of caribou from a cooler. He comes back empty-handed. "We forgot it at home," he says, but it isn't a big deal, because "food is all around you." So, they go looking for geese. A gaggle is only a few hundred metres away, bathing in the sunshine but beaten by the wind. Jeronimo waits. And waits. But the geese refuse to fly, the wind saving them this time. Over dinner of hot dogs and frybread, James says he hopes the marine conservation area will protect geese and other beings.

"We have a responsibility to speak up for the animals. We have to be their voice," James says. But speaking up hasn't always come easy. "I used to be shy," he reveals, especially when the people around him spoke English, a language he didn't learn until he started working as a "tire man" at the Victor diamond mine, 90 kilometres upstream from Attawapiskat, in 2006. "But I got to a point where I could no longer keep quiet." If actions speak louder than words, James and Monique have both made themselves clear by going upriver to the Ring of Fire to mark Cree sovereignty — being present on the land, observing and recording changes, mapping old burial sites and even planting the Attawapiskat First Nation's flag there.

"I WORRY about what's going to come floating down the rivers if mining starts in the Ring of Fire."

Jeronimo expresses his voice through the videos he's producing to bring the tawich to those who can't imagine what it's like. "Most people think Ontario is all forest," he says, "but Omushkego land is so much more. It's my home, my history, my people." His storytelling, which showcases the vastness of Omushkego land and its rich biodiversity, has earned him credits toward his undergrad studies in geography and environmental management at the University of Waterloo. The decision to study science came in his early teens when he started asking questions his parents didn't have answers for: why the river's water level is getting lower, why new species of birds, such as cormorants and pelicans, are expanding their range into the area. By bridging two knowledge systems, Jeronimo hopes to create a clearer

image of what's happening to the land and animals — and in turn, his people — so he can help guide positive change, perhaps as a GIS specialist and land guardian. (The national marine conservation area, if approved, comes with funding for guardian programs and other job opportunities in the communities.)

"It's hard for people to grasp the love we have for this land," Jeronimo says. Southerners tend to see the tawich as wilderness or as a park, even though it has always been animated by people. "For us, it's our life, and we have a duty to defend it," he says. He believes the marine conservation area can become reality if the Mushkegowuk Council can better communicate why it matters to Cree ways of being. "It *has* to go through," Jeronimo emphasizes. "The land has always looked after us. Now it's time that we give back to the land by protecting it." ❂

This story was funded by a grant from the Institute of Journalism and Natural Resources.

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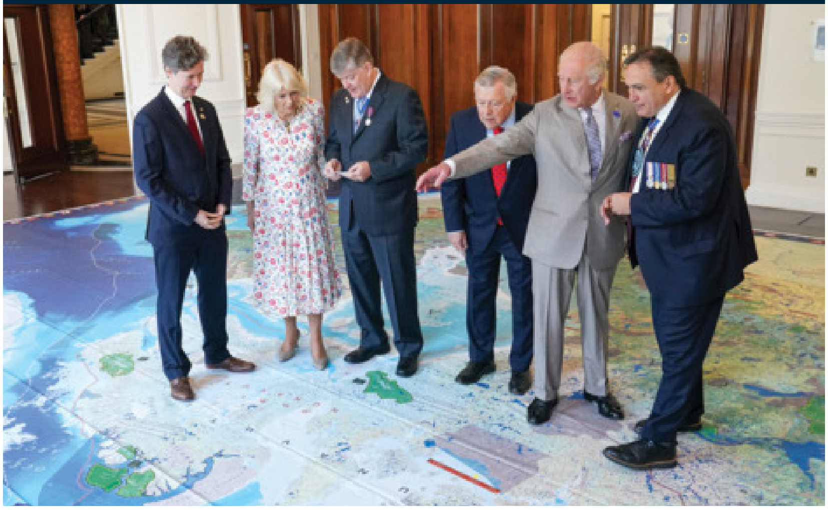
KING CHARLES III AND QUEEN CAMILLA EXPLORE A GIANT FLOOR MAP



King Charles III and Queen Camilla explore a Can Geo Education giant floor map with (from left) Robert Fry, Ron Hallman, Hon. Ralph Goodale and Chief Perry Bellegarde at Canada House on May 20.

King Charles III and Queen Camilla visited Canada House in London on May 20 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the opening of the High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom, an enduring symbol of the deep and historic relationship between Canada and the United Kingdom.

During the moving celebration, the King and Queen of Canada explored a giant floor map of Canada, illustrating their deep affection for the country and, implicitly, rebutting those who would question Canadian sovereignty.

Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Hon. Ralph Goodale, and Deputy High Commissioner Robert Fry were joined on the map by the Honorary President of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, Chief Perry Bellegarde, and the President and CEO of Parks Canada, Ron Hallman, who guided their Majesties on a tour of the national parks and historic sites shown on the map.

The map was created by Canadian Geographic Education, the Society's educational arm, in collaboration with Parks Canada and showcases the full breadth of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, including every national park, national marine conservation area, and national historic site across the country.

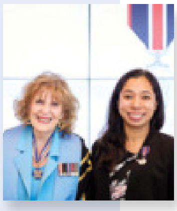
"It was an honour to show their Majesties some of the most beautiful sites across the country," said Bellegarde. "King Charles III has dedicated much of his life to protecting nature, and we know how much he values the extraordinary natural heritage that means so much to Canadians."

Added John Geiger, CEO of the RCGS, "The King has travelled to all of Canada's provinces and territories, from sea to sea to sea, and has been to some very remote places in the country, even diving in the High Arctic. We are delighted that the King and Queen were able to revisit some of their own experiences in Canada by way of a map that is currently circulating in classrooms across Canada through our education program. Their deep affection for Canada was obvious."

— Rosemary Thompson

SOCIETY BRIEFS

The Society is set to receive a significant gift from the Oughtred family: a handmade and hand-painted globe, custom designed by **Bellerby & Co Globemakers**. The one-of-a-kind globe prominently features Canada in "Imperial pink," and a quote from iconic Canadian author **Margaret Atwood**.



On Earth Day, the RCGS awarded several **King Charles III Coronation Medals** to recognize outstanding contributions to the Society and to Canada. The **Hon. Lois Mitchell,** president of the Society, presided over the ceremony, and medallists included Arctic scientist and Explorer-in-Residence **Emily Choy** and geographer **Lynn Moorman**.

Exploration aficionados will likely recognize a familiar face among the growing collection of artifacts at 50 Sussex. An original plaster bust of **Vilhjalmur Stefansson** by German-Canadian sculptor Emanuel Hahn was donated to the Society by the sculptor's family. Stefansson was a founding Fellow of the Society and surveyed some of the last uncharted land in the Canadian Arctic.

EXPLORER JOHN HEMMING AWARDED LAWRENCE J. BURPEE MEDAL

Clockwise from LEFT: Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (left) presented Hemming with the medal on May 12; Hemming (right) on Brazil's Xingu River in 1971; and with Wade Davis (right) in 2011.

On May 12, I had the honour of helping to recognize an extraordinary scholar, activist, and dear friend, John Hemming, with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society's Lawrence J. Burpee Medal, which celebrates outstanding contributions to the advancement of the field of geography.

Honour, decency, kindness, and generosity are aspirational traits of character in many lands; in Canada they come to you as birthmarks. John was born in Vancouver, but lived there only briefly during the wartime emergency before finding his life in Britain. But having known this wonderful man as a friend for 30 years, and as a scholarly mentor for half a century, I can say without hesitation that John is the most thoroughly Canadian Englishman I've ever met.

His expeditionary life is the stuff of legend. Fresh out of Oxford in 1961, he and two college friends, Richard Mason and Kit Lambert, set off to explore Brazil's Iriri River. Four months into the expedition, their party was ambushed by the Panará, at the time an unknown and uncontacted tribe; Richard Mason was killed with arrows and clubs.

The tragedy only fired John's heart, furthering his concern for the fate of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon. Over subsequent decades of fieldwork, he would come to know 45 tribes throughout Brazil, four of them uncontacted at the time of his encounters.

As an activist, John, along with his close friend Robin Hanbury-Tenison, co-founded Survival International, an organization that has fought for the rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide for nearly 60 years.

> "HE IS THE MODEL OF AN **INDEPENDENT** SCHOLAR.

As a scholar, John devoted 26 years to his masterpiece, a three-volume history of the Brazilian Amazon, distilled in three books: *Red Gold* (1978); *Amazon Frontier* (1985) and *Die If You Must* (2004). His other books include *History of the Inca* (1970), *Monuments of the Incas* (2010), *Tree of Rivers: The Story of the Amazon* (2008) and *Naturalists in Paradise: Wallace, Bates and Spruce in the Amazon* (2015).

As a literary mentor, John came into my life when I was a young botanist travelling the Andes in 1974. His widely acclaimed first book, *History of the Inca*, transported a young scholar through time and space, allowing the reader to sense and feel both the immensity of what the Inca achieved, as well as the tragedy and enormity of the loss that the collapse and final destruction of the Empire implied. As much as any book, *History of the Inca* taught me what words can do.

That John was able to write all of these extraordinary books, even while running a family business and serving as director and secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, a post he held from 1975 until 1996, was deeply inspiring. He is the model of an independent scholar, fully capable and empowered to bring rigour and intellectual insight to whatever subject aroused his passion and inspired his sense of justice, fairness and truth. ✵

— *Wade Davis*

OPPOSITE: ARTHUR EDWARDS - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES. SIDEBAR, FROM TOP: COURTESY BELLERBY & CO GLOBEMAKERS; MELODY MALONEY/CAN GEO; JAVIER FRUTOS/CAN GEO.
THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: RILEY SCHNURR; © JOHN HEMMING; GAIL PERCY.

FEATURED FELLOW: GEORGE STROUMBOULOPOULOS

One year after widespread flooding devastated Pakistan, television personality George Stroumboulopoulos filmed a special episode of his CBC TV show in the country to raise awareness of the floods' impact.

WARRICK PAGE

From his early beginnings in radio to soaring success in television, George Stroumboulopoulos is a force in Canadian journalism. With the spirit of an explorer and the heart of a humanitarian, Stroumboulopoulos's career has taken him from Syria to the Arctic. The broadcaster now uses his platform to amplify diverse voices and champion causes through his ambassadorship with the United Nations World Food Programme. Here, Stroumboulopoulos reflects on his upbringing, his influences and what it means to live a life of adventure.

On getting out there

My introduction to adventuring started the old-school way: I strapped a bunch of bags on the back of a motorcycle. I started to ride across the continent by myself. It was my love of motorcycling that really put me out in the world in that respect. I grew up watching those late '60s libertarian USA biker movies. From my earliest memories, I just wanted freedom. I think in independent movies at that time, freedom was often represented by bikers and then ultimately Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda [in the movie *Easy Rider*], so they became enormous influences to me.

On his Toronto upbringing

My mother is everything. She was a teenager when she had me — she was 19. We grew up in these really interesting neighbourhoods on the west side of Toronto, the kinds of neighbourhoods you would read about in newspapers and not for good reasons. My mother had three jobs. Kindness and selflessness is a really important part of my mother's identity. That definitely landed on my sister and me. The other thing I saw from my mother was work ethic. Part of the reason I'm durable is because my mother taught me when I was very young.

On the meaning of 'explorer'

To me, it is about history, because you get to a place and you don't try to plant your flag on it; you [try] to understand what happened there. I like the idea of introducing people to the incredible experiences that people have had on this planet. Being an explorer is about feeding your curiosity. It's the fact that we are all learning about what this world is, where we come from, what it could be — and honestly, just how majestic the natural world is.

On our role in the universe

There is no brain on this planet that can understand the infiniteness of this [existence]. I'm more interested in the poetry applied to the infinities of this world as opposed to the science, because I'm not gonna live long enough to know that. I don't care about it. I'm just this tiny little thing. If there is life on another planet, which there has to be, and if that life is sentient, it doesn't even know we exist, and they're pondering the same things. And how beautiful is the not knowing? I love that so much. ❈

—Interview by David McGuffin

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UFOS OVER MTL

On November 7, 1990, an American tourist looked up from the rooftop pool at the Hotel Bonaventure in downtown Montreal and saw something she was certain was not from this world. Hundreds of people in the area saw the same. Learn more about this strange sighting and its aftermath in the September/October issue.

APPLES TO ACADIANS

In 1769, an Acadian woman named Marie-Modeste LeBlanc planted a single apple tree on her family's backyard orchard in Baie-Sainte-Marie, N.S. Yet by 2018, only a few of the trees remained in existence. In an upcoming issue, journalist Karen Pinchin weaves the parallel stories of the Acadians and this remarkable apple nearly lost to time.

NOURISHING CONNECTIONS

As the late chef, author and television host Anthony Bourdain once said, "food is everything we are." In the September/October issue, explore what that means to Canada's immigrant diasporas through a selection of stories about the neighbourhood restaurants — understated, affordable and authentic holes-in-the-wall and food counters — that serve as places of cultural connection.

SPOT THE OWL

After losing a thousand birds, B.C.'s entire northern spotted owl population now rests on the wings of one lone female, last in seen in the upper Fraser Valley. But efforts are underway to bring this species back from the brink. Writer Brad Badelt visits a captive breeding facility in Langley to learn more about this Hail Mary recovery effort. Watch for it in a future issue.

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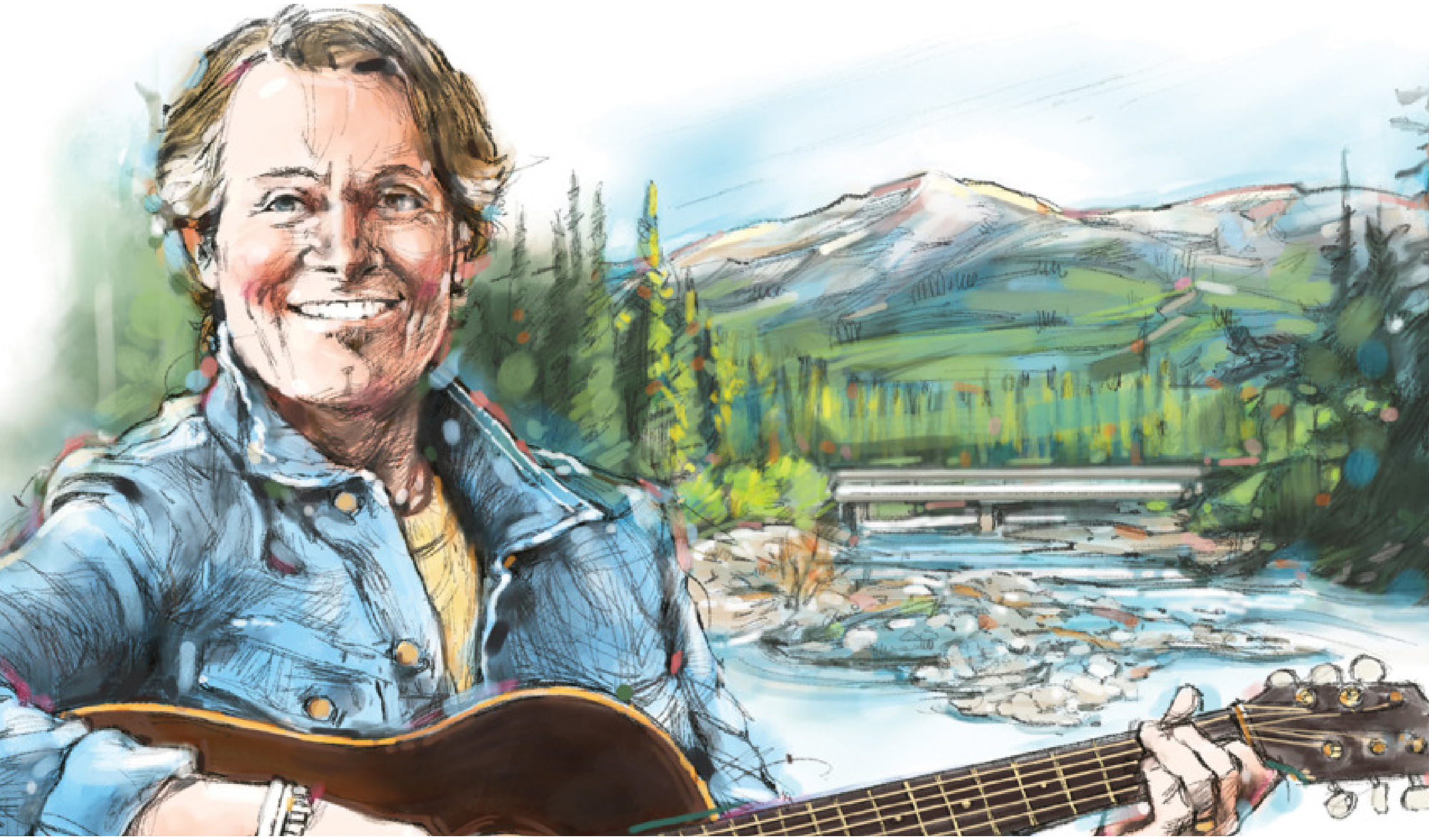


Jim Cuddy

The Blue Rodeo frontman on his connection to Alberta's Lake Louise townsite

I have been to so many incredible places in Canada: from the mouth of the Mackenzie River to the north end of Newfoundland and countless places in between. But the most impactful place for me is Lake Louise.

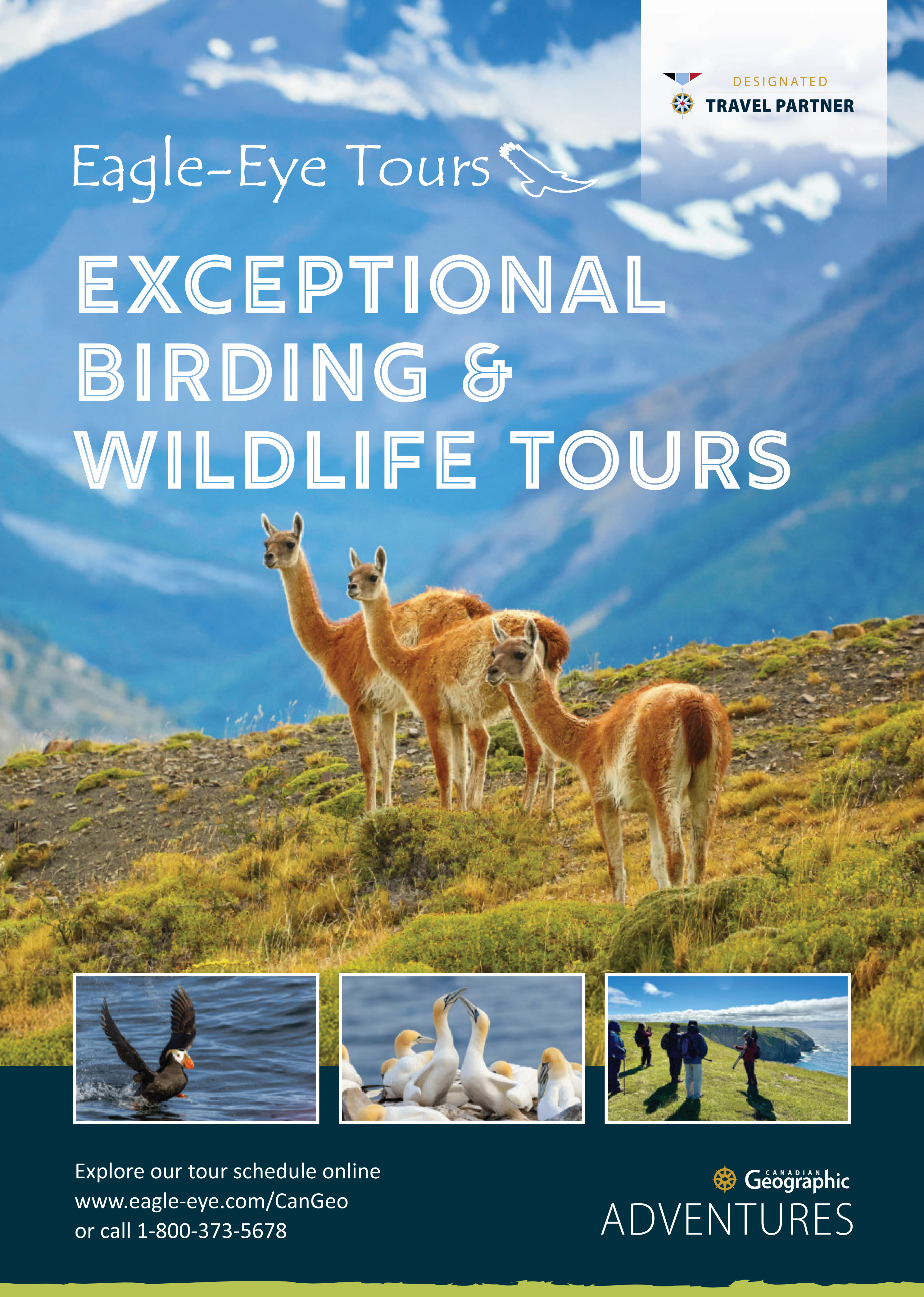
I found myself living in the Rocky Mountains right out of high school, escaping a relationship that didn't work out, and falling in love with the West's wild beauty. I lived in Banff for a year working as a ski room attendant and spent the following summer in Lake Louise painting houses. It was during this time I was starting to delve into music and play in front of people. Almost every night after finishing work, my friends and I would play our guitars and drink and laugh. I have a vivid memory of my friend Mike and I walking up a road from a campground, and though it was an arduous uphill trek, we were singing "Late for the Sky" by Jackson Browne at the top of our lungs.

The Rockies are invigorating. They're enlivening. The last time I was at Lake Louise, my wife and I were celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary. We fell asleep to the sound of the rushing river. The mornings brought a crispness to the air I could smell, and a cold that didn't bother us at all. We swam everywhere we could — from Moraine Lake to the Bow River — despite glacial temperatures. We spent time mountain biking, too, coming across signs warning us of bears in the area. The mountains have a way of waking up your senses and making you conscious of every moment. ❂

—as told to Samantha Pope

Banff National Park is located within the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8 and the Métis Homeland.

KERRY HODGSON



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